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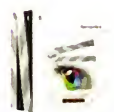
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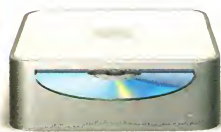
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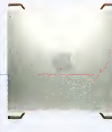
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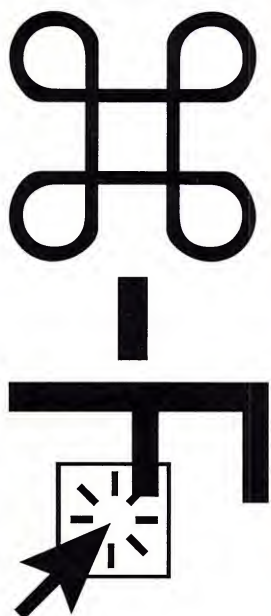
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Focus.

023

To the future.

By Matthew JC. Powell, Tony Smith and Osmund Iversen.

This issue marks twenty years of Australian Macworld. Rather than taking the opportunity to wallow in nostalgia (OK, maybe just a little bit) we thought we'd have a look into the crystal ball and guess at what the next twenty years may hold for the Mac, the magazine, and you.

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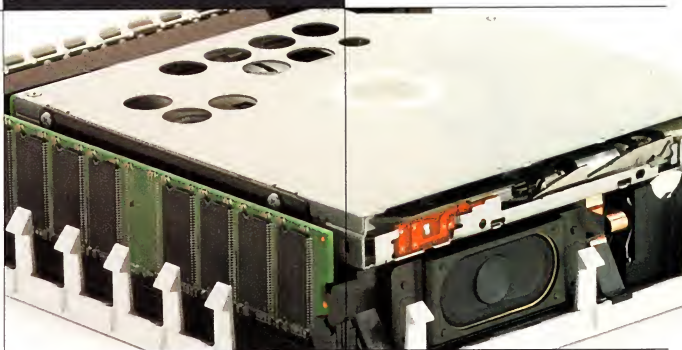
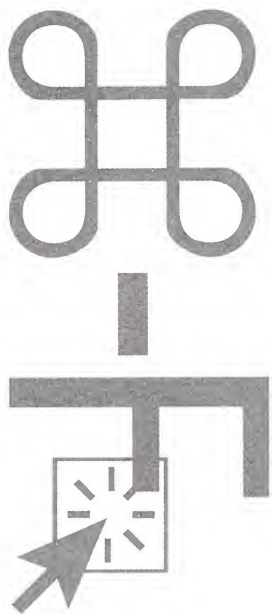
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Buzz.

Apple updates PowerBooks

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After a very long wait, Apple announces its new range of portables for pros. The bad news is they're not G5s. The good news is, that's all the bad news.

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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.

**Hot Links**www.amazon.com

Where I bought the offending object

Circumvention — or perhaps circumnavigation.

I've done something rather rash. I was kind of cross, you see, and when I get cross sometimes I get impulsive. Don't try this at home. Seriously, don't.

It all started with a couple of things that Steve Jobs said at the Macworld Expo keynote last month. Or, more accurately, one thing he said and one thing he didn't say.

The thing he didn't say was that the iTunes Music Store is opening any second now here in Australia. I don't mean to harp on it, but I've really been looking forward to using the Music Store. Every time another country gets added to the list I feel snubbed — *Apple likes Ireland better than me*, that kind of thing. It's not entirely rational, but it gets under my skin.

The thing he said was that iTunes Music Store prepaid cards are the number three top-selling item at Amazon.com. What if, I wondered, I bought a prepaid card from Amazon? Since payment would be via Amazon, I wouldn't have to worry about Apple not liking my credit card — thus circumventing the first of many barriers Apple has in place to restrict use of the Store geographically. Would I be able to use the card here? It could be an expensive exercise in finding out, but I was, as I've said, rather impulsive.

Whilst waiting in the press room at Apple's Sydney "mini-Macworld" event, I went to Amazon and ordered a \$US15 prepaid card. They only sell one denomination. At Apple retail stores in the US, you can get iTunes Music Store gift vouchers for any amount you want, but you can't buy these online — you need an American credit card, just like the Store itself.

Amazon accepted my credit card (why would it not?) but wouldn't deliver the prepaid cards outside the US. For a moment I felt thwarted. Then I recalled the mail redirection service I used to get around the restrictions on iPhoto book ordering (see Commentary 01.2005). I told Amazon to send my prepaid card to Bradenton, Florida, and waited.

Within 24 hours the card was shipped. Three days later I received an e-mail from Access USA saying they'd received a parcel addressed to me and would forward it at the end of the week. A week later it was sent from Florida (I'd selected "weekly shipments" instead of "immediate shipments" when signing up, to save a bit of money). A few days after that it arrived on my doorstep — green and shiny and with a magnetic strip I don't

quite understand. Given it's for an online service, where am I meant to swipe it?

Anyway, with card in hand, I opened up the iTunes Music Store. I clicked on "Prepaid Cards", then scratched the back of the card to reveal the secret 16-digit code. I typed it in, and was met by a dialog box asking me to set up my account for use at the iTunes Music Store. Progress.

What followed involved a bit of chicanery and — I'll be truthful to you — lying, to get Apple to accept that my account was valid for buying music. In the end, though, it did. My account was activated. I overcame Apple's refusal to open the store here, its refusal to sell me a gift certificate online, its stopping Amazon from posting me a prepaid card, and even the last few bureaucratic hurdles designed to stop me using a prepaid card should one happen into my possession. I won.

I'm not going to say exactly what I did to get past the past few barricades. This is because doing what I did and then actually buying music would be violating copyright and, essentially, illegal. Having satisfied my hunger for storming Apple's ramparts and defeating its attempts to stop me buying music, I've put the card to one side. I may use it as a bookmark, or carry it in my wallet as a keepsake. I'm not buying music with it — it's enough to know I can.

I will tell you this much. From when I ordered the card to when I took it out of the box was nearly three weeks, during which time it was sent from California to Florida, then back to California and over the ocean to me. I haven't even mentioned the hassle I had with DHL when they lost the parcel for an afternoon. OK, now I have.

I paid Amazon \$US20.58 for the card plus shipping to Florida (\$A27.49 at the prevailing exchange rate) and then I paid Access USA \$US2.40 (\$A3.20) on top of the regular fee of \$US15 (\$A19.40) per month just for keeping a mailbox open in Florida for me. That's a total of \$A50.09 for 15 songs — \$A3.34 per song.

In short, what I have discovered is quite likely the least convenient and most expensive way possible to buy music.

Don't bother trying this at home. ☒

Matthew J.C. Powell



We figured it was about time that web video stopped looking like web video.

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Whither upgrades?

■ Has the success of iPod turned Steve Jobs's head? Has he returned to his former arrogant ways? The decision to launch iLife '05 at a price of \$119 without a discounted upgrade price for purchasers of iLife '04 is more than arrogant — it is insulting.

There is no question that iLife '04 was good value. Likewise there can be no dispute that iLife '05 is worth every cent of its price for new buyers. But to have to pay full price again after less than a year merely to keep up to date is too much. Apple clearly priced iLife as a loss leader to win converts to its computers. It still does, and we all may hope it succeeds.

However, its complicated marketing strategy of selling the product while bundling it free with new computers may well backfire on it by enraging purchasers. I was insulted by a salesman in a Sydney AppleCentre. In response to my complaint that there should have been a lower price upgrade path for purchasers of iLife '04, he sneeringly told me I was fortunate that I'd been able to use iLife for a year for free. There was no apology when I pointed out that I did not get the suite "free" with a new computer, but had bought it at his store. Not good enough Apple!

Geoffrey Luck
Mittagong, NSW

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to Australian Macworld Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the Inspiration prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

We've received a few letters about iLife pricing, including several pointing out that iLife '05 costs \$US79 for Americans, which at current exchange rates comes to about \$104 for us — but we pay about \$15 more than that. Given we get effectively "hobbled" versions of the software thanks to no iPhoto printing and no iTunes Music Store, it's hard to justify, isn't it? An upgrade price, and pricing on parity with the Yanks (or maybe lower, at least until we get all the features) might be good karma. — M.JC.P.

Look closer

■ In the January edition of *The Australian Senior*, there is an article entitled "Be careful with that upgrade". Mostly it's OK. But a reader enquiry about buying an Apple Macintosh computer got the following reply:

"While I consider them first-class computers, and perhaps in some way even superior to some IBM compatibles, I don't advise buying them. This because I don't believe there is as good a range of software around compared to the IBM compatibles."

I am sure I read recently that there were some 23,000 items of software available for Macs. Surely it would have been fair for the writer to check on their information before using an "I believe ..." to a reader who

apparently could have been on the way out from the Wintel fold!

Is there some way to enlighten the dark world out there?

Linda Baskin
Via internet

Unfortunately, Linda, the fact is that there is much more software available for Windows than there is for Mac. Many people, strangely enough, think that is all they need to know about the two platforms. If they look deeper, and ask how much of that software is actually worth having on your machine and how much of it will lead you to a life of misery, the answer would be different.

We do what we can. — M.JC.P.

Super, thanks for asking

■ Your story on "Putting the Super back into SuperDrive" (The Hub. Video 01.2005) seems to suggest that because DVD+R has more supporters this may become the dominant format. DVD+R is not endorsed by the DVD forum, and is in fact a rogue format which I believe was introduced as an alternative by manufacturers to avoid licensing costs to the DVD Forum. DVD+R discs are not able to display the DVD logo for this reason. Many DVD players are also incompatible with the +R format, so it surprises me that +R is the dominant format.



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Despite this, I agree that Apple should include DVD+R support if only to provide compatibility with Windows machines.

You also suggest that external DVD writers are incompatible with iTunes and iDVD. This is not the case. I have a LaCie d2 burner, which includes system updates to allow use with iTunes. There are also (admittedly unofficial) "hacks" that allow iDVD to work with external drives.

Eric Van Dyk
Windsor, Qld

There's that "I believe ..." again. Apple has been a holdout on supporting DVD+R on its machines because of its lack of endorsement by the DVD Forum, a stance for which it has received a lot of criticism (fair and unfair). Apple has changed its mind on that in recognition of clear public demand for support of +R and +RW DVD formats. The rationale behind DVD+R is its wider compatibility with computers and consumer set-top boxes, not simply avoidance of licensing fees.

You're right on the iTunes question, though. The article did imply that iTunes doesn't work with external burners and this is not correct. Thanks for pointing that out. — M.J.C.P.

iBook in the field

■ I have recently swapped from PC to Mac. I recently travelled to Phuket in Thailand to cover

the devastation caused by the Boxing Day tsunami.

Our hotel on Patong beach was booked out by 900 journalists, and many of us made use of the Wi Fi connection in the hotel lobby. I can't say how pleased I was to watch 80 per cent of the journalists and cameramen, in TV, print, and radio — all using iBooks! A lot of the time, the room was filled with about 25 reporters, line after line using iBooks.

I used GarageBand to create my voice reports, then exported the track to iTunes, converted the file to MP3, then e-mailed it back to the newsroom. A lot of the time I was sitting on a beach devastated by the tsunami, filing reports through my Bluetooth connection and my mobile phone.

Ahron Young
3AW News
Melbourne, Vic.

Voice over

■ Dan Warne is very enthusiastic in his recent NetWorth columns about VoIP, but he forgot to mention one thing: the few places that you can actually use it. And he fails to mention that you are limited as to where you can call at the cheap rates.

Overseas sounds pretty good but the mobile rates to the UK are about the same as mobile to mobile using Telstra, or Optus, and the land phone calls are also to restricted areas.

You also have to get an extra phone number, so for a business there is the added expense of yellow pages and stationery etc.

Richard Blundell
Battery Point, Tasmania

Most major providers are currently working on expanding their cheap calling areas to all regional telephone "catchment areas". SmartVoice (see "Hot links") is one new provider that is focusing on this. Its most basic plan offers inter-capital calls for 15c for 10 minutes, or any landline in Australia for 20c for 10 minutes.

Calling mobiles is unfortunately still expensive on VoIP because the high rates are charged by anyone placing a call into the mobile network in the foreign country. However, there are dramatic savings in calling landlines overseas using VoIP. If your VoIP provider has limited coverage in foreign countries for cheap calls, shop around — most don't.

The cost and inconvenience of changing advertising and stationery is a valid concern, and with this in mind, VoIP carriers are lobbying hard for number portability between landlines and VoIP. Of course, businesses that make many interstate calls may still find the costs are offset by the savings. — Dan Warne

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Associate Publisher

Grant Arnott
grant.arnott@niche.com.au

Editor

Matthew J.C. Powell
matthew.powell@niche.com.au

National Advertising Manager

Dominic Miller
dominic.miller@niche.com.au
03 9525 5566

Designer

Nick Georgitsaros
nick.georgitsaros@niche.com.au

Production Manager

Antoinette Santoro
antoinette.santoro@niche.com.au

Production Co-ordinator

Jeanne Tan
jeanne.tan@niche.com.au

Prepress

Emma Meagher
emma.meagher@niche.com.au

(niche):

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ABN 13 064 613 529
Level 3, 165 Fitzroy Street,
St Kilda, Melbourne, Vic 3182
Tel: 03 9525 5566 / Fax: 03 9525 5628

Chairman and Publisher

Nicholas Dover

Managing Director

Paul Lidgerwood

Finance Director

John Clarke

Studio Design Manager

Keely Atkins
keely.atkins@niche.com.au

Subscription Inquiries

Free Call: 1800 804 160
subscriptions@niche.com.au

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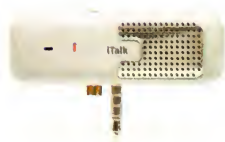
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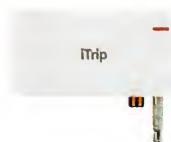
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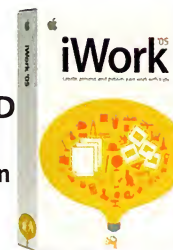
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■ APPLE NEWS



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All the tech specs

Apple updates PowerBooks

Apple in early February announced a modest speed bump to its line of PowerBook G4 laptops, increasing the high-end processor from 1.5GHz to 1.67GHz (a faster G4 processor than it ever put into a desktop machine). That's not all: The refreshed laptop line gains 512MB of standard RAM, faster graphics, faster hard drives and 8x SuperDrives, as well as standard 802.11g-based wireless networking, Bluetooth 2.0 and two patent-pending technologies – the scrolling TrackPad and the Sudden Motion Sensor.

Two fingers on the TrackPad. With the scrolling TrackPad, PowerBook users touch two fingers to the TrackPad instead of just one to scroll through long documents or pan within the window quickly.

"The new TrackPad looks just like the old one, but it works differently," said David Moody, Apple's vice president of worldwide Mac product marketing. "If you touch two fingers to the pad when you reach the edge of the window, it will scroll horizontally or pan vertically within the window."

For users who find the new scrolling feature unnecessary or unwieldy, Apple has added a new Keyboard & Mouse System Preferences option to deactivate it.

Sudden Motion Sensor protects hard drive. Sudden Motion Sensor technology is designed to help protect the



PowerBook's internal hard drive – a tri-axis accelerometer determines if the notebook is accidentally dropped.

"Our system senses if the PowerBook has been dropped and parks the disk drive's heads and locks them before the PowerBook hits the floor," said David Russell, Apple's senior director, portables and wireless.

Backlighting boosted, Dual-Link DVI available.

What's more, all 15- and 17-inch PowerBooks now feature backlit keyboards that are up to 10 times brighter than previous models. "We're using a whole new technology to illuminate the bottom side of the keyboard," said Russell. "The benefit here is that the keyboard lighting works more effectively in lower light conditions. Also, it's a different method of illumination. The difference in battery life with new system is negligible."

Fifteen- and seventeen-inch PowerBook G4 models are now available with 1.67GHz G4 processors paired with ATI Mobility Radeon 9700 graphics processors with either 64MB or 128MB of dedicated graphics memory. All models now ship from the factory with 512MB of 333MHz DDR SDRAM and 5400RPM hard disk drives. SuperDrive-equipped systems now ship with 8x DVD+/-RW/CD-RW optical drives, in place of the 4x drives previously used.

The 17-inch model now features Dual Link support through its Digital Visual Interface (DVI) monitor connector, to support Apple's 30-inch Cinema HD Display. The Dual Link interface can also be specified as a build-to-order option on the 1.67GHz 15-inch model – that also boosts the 15-inch's VRAM to a total of 128MB.

Also new on the 17-inch model is a combined optical digital input/audio line-in minijack, similar to the one included on Apple's AirPort Express wireless networking hub.

New teeth. Apple claims to be the first notebook maker to integrate Bluetooth 2.0 on its computers – Bluetooth 2.0, or Enhanced Data Rate (EDR), works at up to three times the speed of previous Bluetooth implementations, or up to 3Mbps, and is backwards-compatible with Bluetooth 1.2 devices.

"We're the first company to create a computer system with Bluetooth EDR that's been qualified by the Bluetooth Qualification Review Board," Moody said.

Apple is breaking new ground as a Bluetooth EDR-equipped device vendor – other Bluetooth-equipped peripherals on the market today like PDAs, cell phones, printers and other devices use the slower Bluetooth 1.2 specification, which operates at one-third the speed of Bluetooth 2.0. ● Peter Cohen

■ VIDEO



Hot Links

www.apple.com.au/macosex/tiger
Get a preview of some new features

The future is Tiger, QuickTime 7, H.264

One of the most talked-about video codecs in the last year, H.264, will make its debut in QuickTime 7 this year when Apple ships Mac OS X Tiger. Apple says that because H.264 is a standard and has been adopted by standards organisations and many other companies the battle for the successor to the current MPEG-2 video standard is basically over.

H.264 is a video compression technology that's used in MPEG-4 – the industry-standard video technology that uses Apple's QuickTime file format as its basis. Apple has built H.264 right into the QuickTime media architecture the same way as it has other QuickTime video codecs. This way, developers will be able to easily access QuickTime Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to support H.264 encoding and decoding capabilities in their own software and users will be able to select H.264 as an output option for their QuickTime-based projects.

"As of this month there are over 120 companies that have announced over 200 specific products that will read, write, distribute or in some way work with H.264," Frank Casanova, Apple's director of QuickTime product marketing, said. Casanova points to companies like British Telecom, Intel, Motorola, Samsung and DirecTV as examples of companies that have chosen H.264 as the future for their industries.

One feature that makes H.264 particularly noteworthy is its ability to deliver the same quality of video as you see on a DVD, for example, at as little as half the data rate. Another is H.264's ability to scale smoothly from very limited bandwidth applications like 3G cell phones all the way up to HD-quality video, and everything in between.

With its ability to encode content for so many mediums, Apple sees uses for H.264 in many of the everyday things we do today, including DVD movies, cable television providers, on-demand television in hotels and next-generation cellular telephones. For example, with H.264, DVD content authoring houses could use the same size DVD disk, but output the content in HD quality.

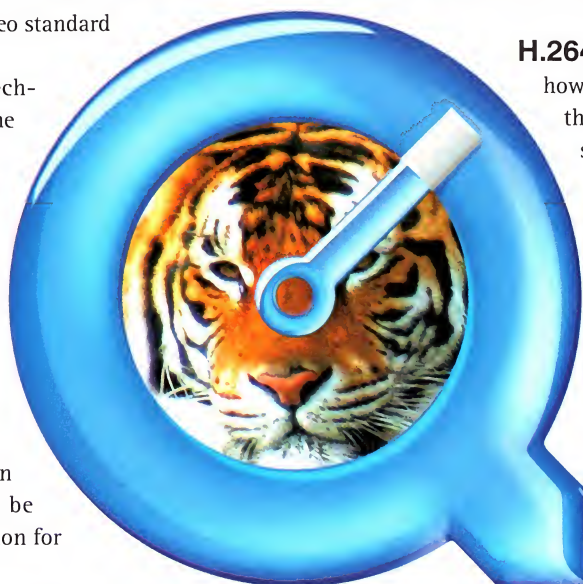
H.264 gained traction last year being ratified for the HD-DVD

and Blu-Ray specifications – the two new high definition DVD content standards. In November the Digital Video Broadcasting Steering Board approved a revision to its implementation guidelines for audio and video codecs over a broadcast Transport Stream. The revision included the Apple-supported H.264. The technology has also received the nod from the MPEG-4 group, the 3GPP group and the Association of Japanese Broadcasters.

"They have said the future of their digital transport is H.264 because of its efficiency and quality," said Casanova. "Before it's even shipped in any significant volume there are already hundreds of products that are being developed for it."

With its current model, Apple says that it will be able to distribute millions of copies of H.264 with QuickTime 7 fairly quickly.

"Clearly, when we ship QuickTime 7 in [Mac OS X] Tiger and then ship the Windows version, we are going to continue our distribution where we left off with QuickTime 6," said Casanova. "We have distributed over 300 million copies of QuickTime 6 and we distribute 400,000 copies a day."



H.264 at work. People that want to see how H.264 works have to look no further than a Steve Jobs keynote. Since Jobs started showing the new version of iChat AV that will be included with Mac OS X Tiger, people have been seeing H.264 at work.

"H.264 is used in our iChat AV technology in Tiger," said Casanova. "We can actually encode H.264 on Macintosh in real-time and give you a pristine video conferencing experience."

From Hollywood to your house.

Apple said that when it shows H.264 to the people in Hollywood responsible for the

"dailies" (daily rendering of films) and

other projects, they are very impressed because they can produce their work with better quality at the size file size. But what about using H.264 at home?

Apple said that all users will notice a big difference using H.264, whether they are in a Hollywood film studio or at home. Any application that uses the QuickTime 7 export panel will have direct access to H.264, like Final Cut Pro, iMovie, QuickTime and any QuickTime-based third-party application.

"You will notice a difference because the video that you export now has a certain frame size and quality," said Casanova. "Using the same settings with H.264 you will have larger frame size and better quality. There will be a noticeable advantage and benefit using H.264. That's why it's so exciting – it really does affect everyone."

Although new products are on the way to support H.264, you won't be able to burn an H.264 encoded DVD and play it on your current DVD player. Current players look for an MPEG-2 stream, while the new players will accept an H.264 stream. ● Jim Dalrymple

It's about standards

Apple left no doubt that H.264 is the future, replacing current technologies. The confidence comes from the fact that the technology is not proprietary and is an accepted standard in the industry.

"H.264 is the future of broadcast — it will replace the older MPEG technologies," said Casanova. "Because it's a standard there are no other encroaching technologies — nothing else out there really matters. Windows Media, while good looking, is not a standard and it's just not going to play a role in this space. We understand how it works because we contribute to the standard and we help evolve the standard — we are not trying to compete with the standard the way Microsoft is."

The line in the sand has been drawn and Apple feels it is on the right side — the side supporting standards. Its competition, mainly Microsoft, has to date not chosen to support or contribute to the standard.

"In this entire world of standards, it is Microsoft versus the world and that's not a good place to be," said Casanova. "The world has voted for standards and we are on the side of standards."

■ HARDWARE



Hot Links

www.evouent.com

Vertical mouse

www.usboverdrive.com

Drive unsupported USB peripherals

The mouse went up

Finally, someone has made a mouse that takes my wrist out of a twisted, pain-inducing position, and makes me look good doing it. That's why I love the very thoughtfully designed Evouent VerticalMouse 2, which puts your hand in a neutral, handshake position — reducing strain on your wrist. There are no Mac drivers, so you'll need USB Overdrive (see "Hot links") to use more than the left-click, right-click, and scrolling functions supported natively by OS X — and to program the buttons. But that's a small price to pay to avoid pain and injury.

The VerticalMouse 2 costs \$139 from Aussie distributor F1 Computing Services on 03 97050420 ● Jennifer Berger



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■ EXPO REPORT



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 SmartDeck
www.roxio.com
 Popcorn
www.macsoftgames.com
 Close Combat: First to Fight
www.xerox.com
 Phaser EX7750

Best of the rest

Apple's iPod shuffle and Mac mini may have grabbed most of the limelight, but they were only two of many significant products unveiled at this year's San Francisco Expo. Among the other highlights:

■ **TextWrangler 2.0.** This consumer-level text editor from Bare Bones Software does many of the things that BBEdit does. And Bare Bones is giving the program away.

■ **Radeon X800 XT Mac Edition.** ATI Technologies now offers a graphics card that can keep up with the Power Mac G5. The X800 can drive a 30-inch Cinema HD Display and a 23-inch Cinema HD Display together, thanks to both ADC and dual-link DVI connectors.

■ **Transmit 3.** One of the best FTP apps around just got better: Transmit from Panic now has tabs, spring-loaded folders, and improved synchronisation.

■ **naviPlay.** iPod users finally get a truly portable, wireless headphone device: the Bluetooth-powered naviPlay from Ten Technology. With its 30-foot range, your iPod sounds great from across the room or deep in your backpack.

■ **Elektron.** This security product, from Corriente Networks, protects your small business's wireless network with RADIUS/802.1X authentication. To ensure that your network is free from snoops and unauthorised users, Elektron requires that each user have a unique name and password for access. To keep network traffic private, the product generates a separate encryption key for each user.

■ **Solio.** This solar-powered battery charger from Better Energy Systems fires up small electronic products – such as iPods, mobile phones, and PDAs – that connect to the unit via interchangeable adapters. To charge it, simply expose the three solar panels to the sun's rays. If no sun is available, you can always charge it via a wall socket.



■ **SmartDeck.** The Griffin Technology SmartDeck's sensing technology lets you use your car stereo's controls to play, pause, skip backwards and forwards, and stop tracks on your iPod. It gives you much of the functionality of expensive adapters at a fraction of the price, as well as automatic volume control.



■ **Popcorn.** Popcorn puts a friendly face on backing up unencrypted DVDs, using Roxio's proven Toast engine and an intuitive visual interface. Select which video, audio, and language tracks to back up, and Popcorn will compress the video of an entire dual-layer DVD to fit on a standard 4.7GB DVD while maintaining high quality and full audio fidelity.

■ **Close Combat: First to Fight.** This forthcoming squad-based tactical action shooter from MacSoft lets gamers experience what it's like to be a marine working in close-quarters urban combat, using the same tactics and techniques real US marines use. The game will be released simultaneously for Mac, PC, and Xbox. Pricing not announced at press time.

■ **Phaser EX7750, from Xerox:** The printer manufacturer has teamed up with EFI to introduce this colour laser printer aimed at graphics professionals who need to produce colour-accurate documents.



■ SOFTWARE



Hot Links

www.microsoft.com/mac
Home of Entourage

Entourage misses out on Spotlight

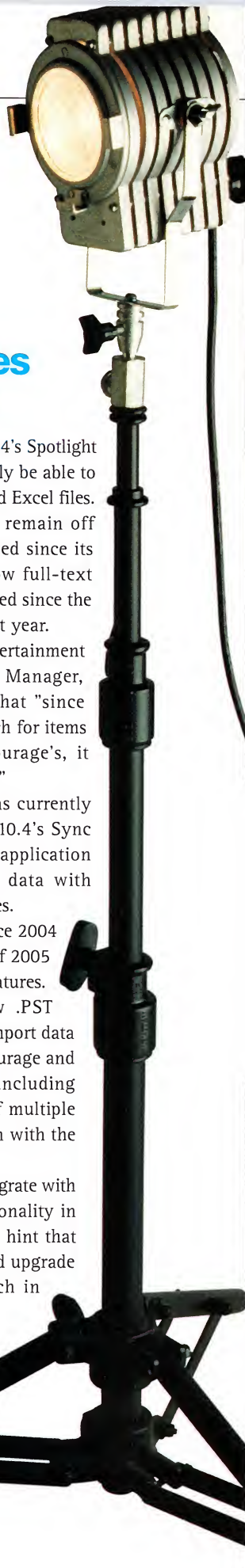
Microsoft says Mac OS X 10.4's Spotlight search technology will only be able to read Word, PowerPoint and Excel files. Its e-mail client, Entourage, will remain off limits. Entourage has been criticised since its original release for extremely slow full-text search — criticism that has not ceased since the introduction of Entourage 2004 last year.

Cynthia Kouvas, Home and Entertainment Division Product Marketing Manager, Microsoft Australia, told *AMW* that "since Spotlight was not designed to search for items within a database file like Entourage's, it cannot search for Entourage items."

However, she said Entourage was currently being upgraded to support OS X 10.4's Sync Services, which allow third party application developers to sync any type of data with multiple Macs and handheld devices.

Microsoft says it will release Office 2004 Service Pack 2 in the second half of 2005 to take advantage of Tiger's new features. The upgrade will include a new .PST import tool to allow customers to import data from Outlook 2001 for Mac to Entourage and better Exchange Server support, including better synchronisation, viewing of multiple calendars and increased integration with the Exchange Global Address Book.

"We are investigating ways to integrate with Spotlight or provide similar functionality in a future version," said Kouvas, a hint that customers might have to buy a paid upgrade to eventually get Spotlight search in Entourage. ● Dan Warne



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■ MOBILITY



Hot Links

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All about the Amazon — river, not bookshop

Safari goes safari: Part one

More than most companies, Apple's knack for dreaming up cute names for hardware and software is a very successful part of its branding. Witness Safari, a web browser whose name suggests exotic adventures in IT-unfriendly places.

Apple's resurgence is due more to the quality of its products than marketing alone, and so it only seemed fair to take the company at face value and test out a Mac in a road trip worthy of its browser's ambitions.

With that thought I threw 12 trusty inches of iBook into my rucksack for a jungle tour of truly Safari-like proportions — from Colombia to Brazil, down the great, brown Amazon river.

On the way I picked up some tips for travellers to places rarely visited by a glowing white apple.

One potential headache was resolved immediately. The modern transformers used by IT gear can operate on almost any type of voltage or current, regardless of country. The iBook takes 100-240 volts at 50 or 60 Hz, which in plain English means your laptop will run from just about any power supply in the world — as long as you have the right plug.

Apple as always has a matte-white plastic solution for everything, including international power plugs. And as usual, the complete kit is priced a little higher than you would like to pay. The six plugs cost \$69 and no, they can't be bought separately.

If you are only going to one or two countries and find it difficult to stomach paying for the whole lot, it might be worth simply buying a replacement plug after you have arrived. Of course it is worth ensuring that there are plenty of Mac shops where you are

going or your clever plan might backfire.

That old three percent market share might not make such a difference in metropolitan Sydney, but in downtown Cali, the homicide capital of the world, you quickly realise that not only are Macs something of a novelty, they're a liability too.

In fact it is far easier and cheaper to have a man killed in this part of Colombia than find a plug for your laptop (prices start at \$US10 thanks to healthy competition between the many sicarios — motorbike-riding assassins wielding automatic weapons). Colombia's capital, Bogota, does have a Mac shop, but the earliest they could get a local plug was ten working days and it would cost \$US33. Just for a plug.

The cheapest (albeit slightly clumsy) solution is to buy a converter plug in Australia at the airport just before you leave.

Another necessity is insurance. This can be very tricky to arrange, as there aren't many home and contents plans that would pay out on the theft of a laptop from a hotel room in South America. In fact most insurance agents view requests for insuring anything for travel through Colombia as either a funny joke or an opportunity for early retirement.

Despite the full-scale conflict in the jungles and mountains, there are a select breed of insurers used by the media (photographers in particular) that will consider covering carefully-planned trips.

If you are walking in with just a 12-inch iBook don't expect to get much of a deal. As with any insurance, the more you insure the cheaper it is. Thanks to a very expensive digital camera on loan from Canon my total insurable blew out to \$12,500 — which cost \$798 for six months with Brookvale Insurance Brokers. However this policy covers your gear for pretty much anything, in any corner of the globe.

This is no doubt overkill if you're just taking a three-week trip to the Bahamas but it's definitely bought me some peace of mind.

Next issue: Power supply and the Amazon. ● *Sholto Macpherson*



■ COMP WINNERS



Hot Links

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Prize sponsor

"Virtual Reality"

Back in the January issue, We offered readers an opportunity to win copies of Virtual PC 7, the latest version of Microsoft's PC-emulation software for Mac OS X. All you had to do was describe for us an alternative vision of the universe — one in which you were a dedicated Windows user, not a Machead.

Maybe we didn't make it quite clear enough, or maybe the task was just too hard, but what we were looking for here was Mac people saying nice things about Windows. See, that would have been kind of funny. Plus Microsoft donated the prize, so it would have been, you know, polite ...

What we got was some extremely creative, entertaining and interesting entries — as always from AMW readers — all of them to one extent or another bagging Windows. Apparently Mac advocacy is just so ingrained it's hard to even pretend otherwise.

In the end there were five entries deemed clever and creative enough to win the prize. Chris Flabourith's 1984-like MP3 was downright creepy, and Nick Hollwarth's Bim and Bam made us laugh. Mark Ryan, John Haberecht and Kim Chun Tia were the other winners.

Congratulations to all of you, your copies of Virtual PC 7 will be on their way shortly.

"Win the Lifestyle, Live a Dream"

The other comp we've been running the past few months has been the subscription giveaway worth \$35,000 in amazing prizes. The winner of that competition was Alan Marshall of Doreen, Victoria. Congratulations Alan. ● *Matthew JC. Powell*



Hot Links

www.beatles.com
The other Apple

Consumer sales cannibalising pro business?

In recapping its sales performance in its filing with the US Securities and Exchanges Commission for the quarter ending December 2004, Apple noted that demand for its consumer systems is on an upswing. Apple moved 456,000 iMacs and 271,000 iBooks during the quarter, generating \$US620 million and \$US297 million in net sales, respectively. That's a 147 percent and 34 percent year-over-year increase. Apple attributes this strong growth to the increased availability of the iMac G5, which saw constrained delivery in the previous quarter, as well as the introduction of upgraded iBooks paired with seasonal demand related to the Christmas holiday.

Bullish iBook and iMac G5 sales underscore disappointing results for Apple's pro line. Power Mac G5 net sales and unit sales were off four percent and 19 percent respectively; PowerBook G4 net and unit sales were off 23 and 22 percent, respectively.

Apple thinks the Power Mac G5's sales are suffering because people are turning towards the iMac G5, and Apple also pins the PowerBook's laggard sales "in part to a shift to the new iBooks." Apple said that such movement between its product lines "is typical after new product introductions," however.

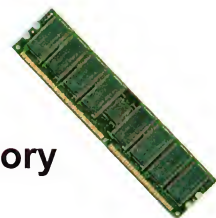
It'll be interesting to see if this trend continues through the current quarter, which has thus far seen refreshed PowerBooks and Apple's new Mac mini, its least expensive Macintosh model ever -- another system squarely aimed at consumers.

Dramatic year-over-year improvements in Apple's educational channel sales were also attributed to interest in the iMac G5 and iBook. First quarter sales yielded 20 percent and 11 percent increases in net sales and unit sales, respectively. This also helped Apple's US education channel sales yield their highest first quarter revenue in seven years.

Beatles still at it. Perhaps no other part of Apple's 10-Q draws more attention than the "Legal Proceedings" entry. Apple noted that its defense continues against Apple Corps, the Beatles' record company. Apple Corps filed suit against Apple Computer in July, 2003, alleging the computer maker breached a 1991 agreement by launching its iTunes Music Store. Apple said that it "filed a Defence" on December 23, 2004 after being served by Apple Corps with "an Amended Bill of Particulars" the preceding month. ● Peter Cohen



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Another music store we don't get here. Goody.

Will subscription-based services win out?



Nearly two years after its debut, the iTunes Music Store continues to best all rivals. According to Apple, the store has a 70 percent share of the market for legal music downloads, and covers 65 percent of the global music market. So how do other stores hope to compete? With subscription-based services.

At December 2004's Music 2.0 digital music conference in Los Angeles, speakers couldn't praise Apple enough for the success enjoyed by the company's iTunes Music Store – that is, when those speakers weren't predicting that the store would soon tumble from its spot at the top of the online-music heap because Apple refuses to, as Steve Jobs says, “rent music”.

While Apple's approach to online music sales is an à la carte model – typically 99 US cents for a single download or \$US9.99 for a complete album – other services, including Napster and RealNetworks' Rhapsody, charge their users a monthly fee. Napster users, for example, pay \$US14.95 a month for access to the service's 700,000-song library.

“It's the ultimate jukebox, being able to listen to everything without having to buy,” Laura Goldberg, chief operating officer at Napster, told Music 2.0 attendees.

It's clear how music sellers benefit from a subscription-based model – those monthly fees provide a steady, predictable source of revenue. But what's in it for users? There's the variety – but if you're into specific genres and artists, that's like paying for a package of 80 cable TV channels when you watch only eight.

Apple–Real battle rages on

When RealNetworks announced that its Harmony technology would enable protected music downloaded from its store to play on an iPod, Apple was anything but thrilled (see Buzz, AMW 11.2004). In fact, Apple responded by accusing Real of using “the tactics and ethics of a hacker to break into the iPod,” and said it would investigate possible legal action against RealNetworks.

The RealNetworks Music Store competes directly with Apple's iTunes Music Store, but Real has a disadvantage: it doesn't have its own music player, as Apple does with the market-dominating iPod. The only protected format the iPod works with is that of the music sold through the iTunes Music Store.

Recently, Apple has updated the software for some of its iPod music players so that songs bought from Real won't play on them. Real says that it isn't sure why this happened, but that it's working on a fix. Apple suggests that this is what to expect if you use music that isn't officially supported on the iPod.

“As we stated in July, we strongly caution Real and their customers that when we update our iPod software from time to time, it is highly likely that Real's Harmony technology will cease to work with current and future iPods,” an Apple spokeswoman says.

RealNetworks offers its own explanation.

“Apple has made some changes to FairPlay,” says RealNetworks spokesman Matt Graves. FairPlay is the digital rights management (DRM) technology Apple uses to protect music sold through the iTunes Music Store. It's the iPod's support of FairPlay that enables it to play iTunes Music Store songs.

Graves adds that his company is working on a change to Harmony that should restore compatibility with affected iPods, but a target release date hasn't been set.

● Peter Cohen (*Joris Evers contributed to this story.*)

There's also the issue of portability – how do you take that music on the road? Subscription-based services think they may have this problem licked: Microsoft's newest digital rights management software lets users transfer subscription-based content to compatible music players. (It is worth noting that, at this stage, relatively few music players are compatible with Napster).

But for people familiar with the iTunes Music Store, the biggest concern may be one of ownership: when you stop subscribing, what happens to the music you've been paying to hear?

Napster has made much of the economics of its model versus that of the iPod/iTunes combination – pointing out that filling up a 40GB iPod with songs from the Music Store would cost in the neighbourhood of \$US10,000. A Napster subscription, at \$US180 per year, seems relatively modest. Of course, that cost goes on forever, or until you stop subscribing and your music is gone. ● Philip Michaels

Off the net

Latest shareware and free downloads

■ Lugu 1.0.1 \$US19.95 Shareware X

Play the role of an anthropomorphic rebel bunny rabbit in this third-person 3D action game. Incredible graphics and great fun. From an independent developer.

■ MouseZoom 2.1 Freeware X (10.1 or later)

Make your mouse pointer go faster.

■ MailUnreadStatusBar 0.4.3 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Add a Mail.app icon to your menu bar, so you can easily see if there are unread messages.

■ Growl 0.5 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

Multi-purpose, skinnable system alert application.

■ iBackup 3.0.4 Freeware X (10.3)

Simple and reliable program to do scheduled backup of the important files on your Mac.

■ JewelCase 1.6 Freeware X

The best iTunes visualiser of all time!

■ Colloquy 2.0 Freeware X (10.2 or later)

The first truly "Mac-like" program to chat on Internet Relay Chat (IRC) servers.

■ iBatt 1.2.1 \$US15 Shareware X (10.2 or later)

Check how worn out your PowerBook's battery is.

■ Keyword Assistant 1.8.3 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Easily assign keywords to multiple iPhoto images.

■ MenuCalendarClock for Entourage 1.6.2 €24.95 Shareware X (10.2.8 or later and Entourage 2004)

Add a drop-down calendar to your menu-bar clock.

■ Hardware Monitor 1.4 €7.00 Shareware X (10.2.5 or later)

Read all the hardware monitors in your Mac including temperature so you can confirm

that yes, your PowerBook is toasting your chestnuts.

■ rePhormat 1.2 \$US13 Shareware X (10.2 or later)

Batch process photos easily.

■ 24 clock 1.0 Freeware X (10.1 or later)

Keep time the Jack Bauer way, with this "24" styled clock.

■ Firefoxy 1.3 Freeware X (10.2 or later and Firefox 1.0)

Get rid of those nasty Windows form elements in Firefox.

■ Photon 1.1 Freeware X (10.3 or later)

Manage your MovableType or TypePad photo-blog through iPhoto.

■ iTunes Publisher 4 Freeware X

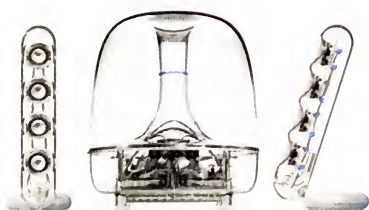
Export your iTunes library as neat web pages or playlists.

■ TextForge 2 Freeware X

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● Dan Wane

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The view from the other side of the counter.

By Fleur Doidge.

The truth about Apple

It was the conspiracy theory to end all conspiracy theories: that one small step for man was even smaller than we thought. NASA never went to the moon. It was all just an elaborate hoax, and how dumb were we?

Or so the theory went. It earned plenty of street cred with plenty of otherwise so-called intelligent people over the last 35 years – including my own mother.

These days it's fashionable to be cynical, even without proper evidence. Or, should I say, especially without evidence? Something in our nature makes us want to say we're too smart, too cool, too god-damned individualistic and ultimately insubordinate to believe – to have faith – in anything we don't know for a fact. We doubt anything we haven't learnt or experienced for ourselves (and we call it education). We love to say: "That's crap. You can't fool me".

Insoluble elements of doubt exist in all human experience. So conspiracy theorists find a willing – even rather credulous – audience.

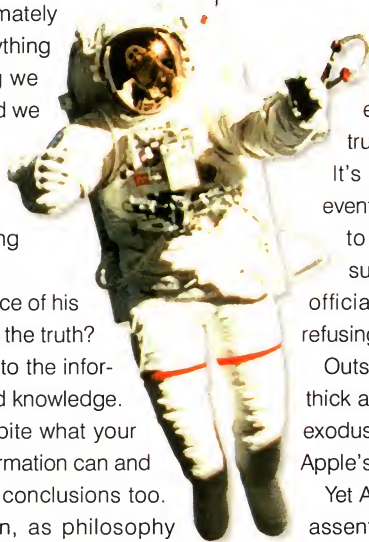
Every journalist is taught to consider the source of his or her information. Who is best placed to know the truth? The answer is, nearly always, the one closest to the information, the one with the most thoroughly tested knowledge. Reasoning and intuition or "gut feeling" (despite what your mother says) without reference to accurate information can and does lead you astray. That goes for negative conclusions too. The most intellectually respectable position, as philosophy lecturers like to argue, might well be to sit on the fence until you get better information. Of course, he who sits on a fence, as my best friends like to argue, eventually gets it up his arse.

Now the thing with the moon landing is that the conspiracy theorists can be superficially quite convincing. For example, some claim the television footage proves additional, artificial light sources were used, because the shadows cast weren't all parallel. Real moon footage, the unbelievers say, should only depict shadows parallel with each other, because the only light source in the scene was supposedly the sun.

It has a nice, clean logic to it, doesn't it?

However, simple experiment blows the argument back down to earth. In fact, the angle of any shadow can be easily altered by factors in the surrounding environment. For example, the terrain over which it passes. If the ground is uneven, the angle of the shadow will change.

The conspiracy theorist knows one thing: that light travels in straight lines. However, he or she fails to take account of irregular objects in the environment that can affect the light, causing it to deviate from its



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straight lines – such as refraction, diffraction and reflection. Light bounces around all over the place, given half a chance.

Logic sucks. Well, not really, but it is crippled if you ask it to work in a vacuum. Laypeople – those lacking knowledge – are often convinced not by evidence they are incapable of assessing but by a speaker's apparent certainty on a topic.

We are more easily convinced if the speaker sounds convincing. Yet many people actually sound more convincing the less they know about any given subject (George Dubya Bush and a host of professional politicians, anyone?). Compounding the tendency to err, we also tend to trust people we think we know.

Perceptions can be a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy, because we tend only to see what we expect to see. Attempts to sew one's shadow to the truth may be as futile as Peter Pan's.

It's easy to believe – given past experience and current events – that Apple doesn't care about its channel. It's easy to point to pieces of evidence, here and there, that support this view: Apple going direct; Apple favouring official AppleCentres over independent retailers; Apple refusing to answer questions about its channel relationships.

Outsiders marvel at resellers who stick with Apple through thick and thin, unable to understand why there is little or no exodus to other brands. Others say they cannot understand Apple's business decisions.

Yet Apple, of course, as most readers of this magazine will assent, regularly produces good product. And Apple itself knows, like nearly other big vendor, that it needs its channel. You know, it's like when the erring husband complains his wife doesn't understand him – in actual fact the partners probably understand each other only too well.

After all, they're still together, despite what they might say or how they might seem. And this is what resellers say, or words to that effect. Yes, they have complaints, but Apple is probably not a Great Satan tempting the poor downtrodden reseller against his or her will.

I'm not suggesting resellers should start talking psychobabble and apply "the Power of Positive Thinking" to the Apple channel.

What I am suggesting is that if those that feel wronged stop focusing so much on the necessary friction between two partners with different interests and ideas and move away from their own preconceived beliefs about a situation, a much better vendor-reseller relationship might be built. With the judicious application of faith, hope and charity by both sides, of course. ☺

Fleur Doidge is a longtime observer of the Mac reseller channel in Australia.



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A vision of the short-term future

“Ten years ago, something happened. Something small. Something most people didn’t notice. But it did touch a few of us. Then a few more. And a few more. And soon that something was spreading in all directions at once. One ripple following another, at a faster and faster pace, each new wave gaining more distance than the last.

And the waves keep coming.”

From the back cover of *“So Far – The First Ten Years of a Vision”*
by Rob Price

When that quote was written back in 1986, in a book marking the first ten years of Apple Computer, the Mac was still fairly new. Apple was selling more 8-bit Apple II machines than Macs, and there weren’t many Mac magazines on the market. *Australian Macworld* – the first Mac mag published outside the USA – had been going for only a year.

Twenty years on, the ripples have kept on coming (albeit with the occasional flat patch). The latest set of ripples began with the iMac and has continued with Mac OS X and of course the iPod.

That’s right, the iPod. No, it isn’t a Mac, but it’s had a more significant impact on what we do with our Macs, and what we expect of them, than just about anything else Apple has ever come up with. It has, essentially, redefined the Mac.

And the ripples keep coming.

Crystal-ball gazing? Prognostication about what the future holds for the Mac is as fraught with danger as it is fun. Entire web sites thrive on guessing what Apple will do over the next six weeks – and they’re usually wrong.

Guessing any further than six weeks into the future is of course just plain silly. As evidence, have a look at the “futuristic” Mac in the illustration opposite. Radical, is it not? A

vision of a far-off future, right? That sketch first appeared in *Australian Macworld*’s June 1995 issue. The future ain’t what it used to be.

Back in *AMW*’s tenth anniversary issue, Osmund Iversen editorialised about the demise of computing. He said, in a nutshell, that the view of the computer as “a calculator in a metal case” had to change. He foretold a future of “embedded” devices, in which computing power was distributed amongst handheld devices, wristbands, even jewellery and clothing. Computing intelligence, he predicted, would be everywhere.

It hasn’t quite happened, but Osmund was certainly on to something. We’ve entered a new age of computing in the past few years, identified not so much by a change in what we call a computer as by a change in what we call “computing”.

A computer is not just office equipment anymore. Crunching numbers doesn’t count – when was the last major innovation in spreadsheets you can remember? Do you think that the needs of power-hungry accountants are driving processor makers on to ever-greater speeds?

Nowadays, computers are expected to handle music and photographs and video and communications – all things that had nothing to do with computers even ten years ago. Back then, playing a CD on your Mac was a novelty. Now, who listens to CDs anymore?

We’re not about to drag out the line that Apple is transforming into a consumer electronics company. Steve Jobs made the point in an interview recently that it’s not that Apple is turning into a consumer electronics company, it’s that “consumer electronics is gradually turning into Apple”.


Think about that for a second. Apple has been about putting power into the hands of its users. From the earliest days of desktop publishing, the Mac turned difficult to use analogue tools into accessible digital equivalents.

Now music has become digital, another medium for the computer to take control of. Likewise photography. Even video, once the preserve of professionals with expensive specialised equipment, is digital and cheap. People who manufacture CDs and film are shaking in fear, or simply giving up.

People don’t wear their computers, as so many have predicted. But they do carry mobile phones with them everywhere, complete with music, photos and even video. The iPod is a part of this too – what you do with your computer, you do wherever you go. It’s all digital – it’s all computing.

As for the box on the desk, it’s gradually moving out of the “computer room” and into the living room. The Mac of the future will be as seamless a part of your home as the TV set and stereo you have now (but won’t need then).

The last word. Of course, in ten years’ time whoever’s running *Australian Macworld* will probably look back on this and say we got it wrong. I’m intrigued to wonder what the magazine will look like then – if indeed print exists at all in 2015.

In the meantime, we’ve got a lot to cover just keeping up with what’s going to happen to digital media in the next few months. So enough of this fun – back to work. 

In the beginning ...

Australian Macworld was launched with a February-March edition in 1985 and stayed bimonthly until February 1987 save for a bonus issue featuring a software guide in September 1985. That bonus issue reflected the success *Australian Macworld* had achieved in its first few months in providing a focal point for the local community of early enthusiasts in a year which saw Australian Mac sales triple while US sales failed to build on what had been achieved there in 1984.

Computerworld Pty Ltd (later IDG) had launched *Australian Micro Computerworld* two years earlier, but in April 1984 had moved closer to the directions of its US

which the first *Australian Macworld Expo* — held at Centrepont, Sydney, on November 6-9 1985 — became a major focus.

From the September 1985 special issue a couple of well known identities from the fledgling Mac industry, David Fox in Sydney and Joe Selvaggi in Melbourne, took over northern and southern region advertising sales, as well as responsibility for selling floor space for *Macworld Expo*. They continued in their ad sales roles until mid-1986, after which they left to give more time to their growing distribution businesses, Fox's InfoMagic and Selvaggi's Pica.

Those departures provided the opportunity for Robert Wells to be recruited as publisher of *Australian Macworld*. Following Chess Wade's departure Wells became editor and publisher for the December 1986/January 1987 edition before hiring Osmund Lind Iversen to take over as editor for 1987. The Wells and Iversen team finally brought some long-term stability on the masthead.



Early days. David Bunnell (left) and then-editor Neville Angove (right) at the first Sydney Macworld Expo.

parent by launching *Australian PC World*. Neville Angove had been hired as technical editor for both *Micro* and *PC World*, then promoted to editor of *Micro* not long before it was folded in late 1984. Angove stayed on to become the first editor of *Australian Macworld*. Chess Wade had joined *Micro* as associate editor when Angove was promoted and continued in that role with *Macworld*, eventually taking over as editor for much of 1986.

With the rest of the team based in Sydney, Tony Smith in Melbourne had been associate editor of *Micro* from its launch until part way through 1984 by when he had become heavily focused on the then brand new Macintosh. Smith was brought back to play a similar role with *Macworld* through its first year and a bit, during

Iversen remained as editor until the April 1996 issue, when Matthew JC. Powell took the reins and Iversen went on to launch the Australian edition of *Publish*, a pioneer in computer-to-plate publishing.

Powell's editorship ended in August 1997 when IDG, publisher of *Macworld*, and Ziff-Davis, US publisher of *MacUser*, merged their Mac interests in a joint venture called Mac Publishing. With that merger, the two magazines became one under the *Macworld* masthead.

In Australia, publication of *Australian Macworld* passed from IDG to Niche Media, which had previously published *Australian MacUser*. Editor Steve Noble ran the title until 2001, when Powell joined Niche to once again take on the editorship.

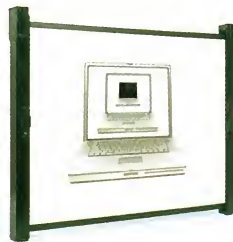
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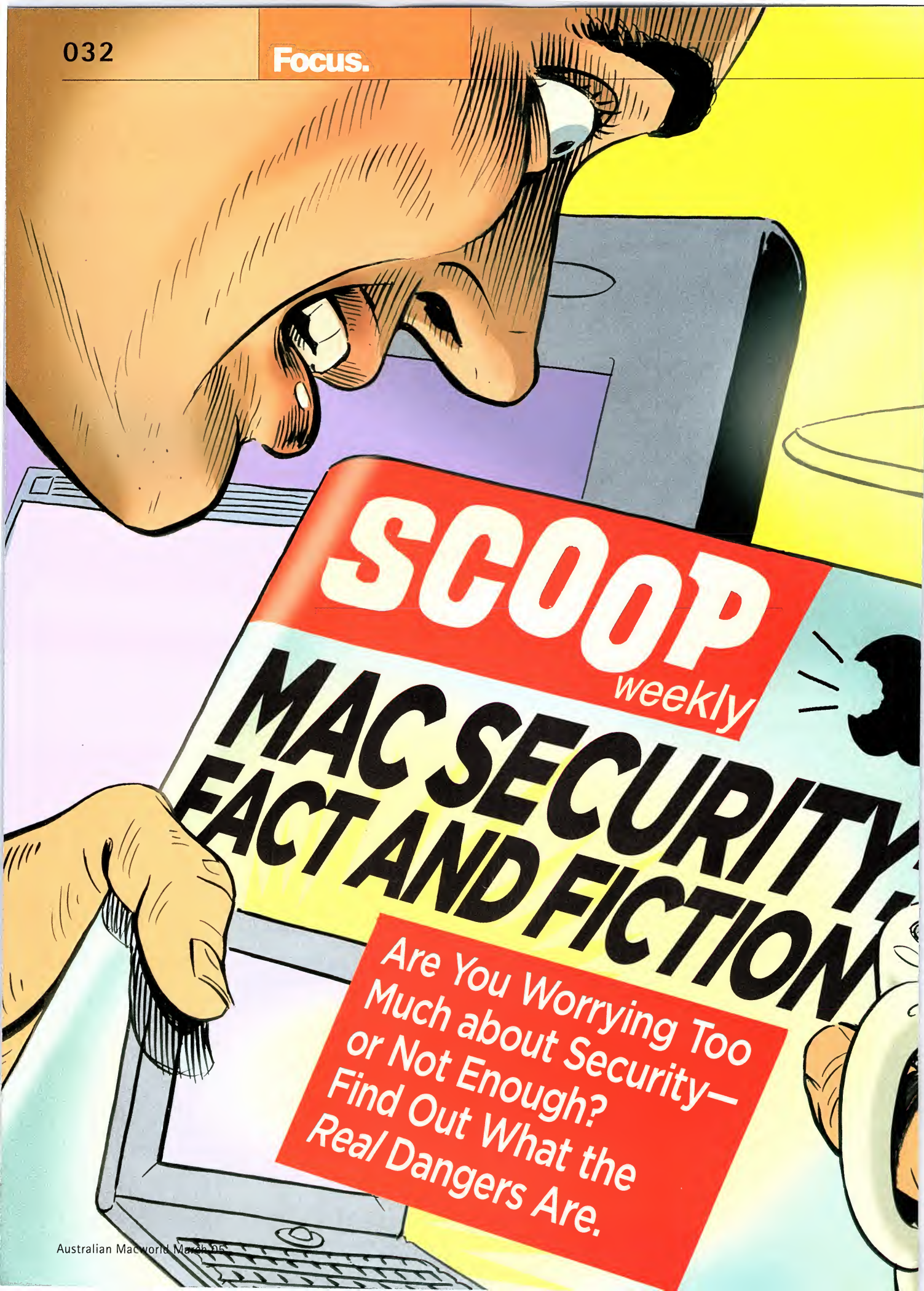
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VIRUSES. SPYWARE. INTERNET HACKERS AND WIRELESS PROWLERS.

Most Mac users gaze on smugly as reports of each new Windows security crisis break. They have good reason: At press time, research from Sophos (a maker of anti-virus software) showed that 68 viruses have affected the Mac while 97,467 have affected Windows. Of those 68, most are a decade old or older and don't directly affect OS X.

Although it may seem that there's no reason to worry about security on your Mac, you shouldn't think you're completely safe. Apple's regular Security Update releases prove that there's cause for concern, and common sense suggests that you're most vulnerable when you let your guard down.

So how can you tell the difference between fear mongering and true dangers? We examined nine common beliefs about Mac security to show you what you really need to worry about.

Mac users don't need to worry about viruses.

FALSE. We've enjoyed a long, glorious stretch without serious malware affecting our platform. That doesn't mean we can afford to let down our collective guard. If there is a virus attack, those of us who have good, up-to-date anti-virus software installed will have the best odds of escaping unscathed.

Mandatory measures. If you don't have anti-virus software installed, see the sidebar "Select your shield" for help. If you're positive you've got anti-virus software installed, but can't name it, you're only half-way there. This is a telltale sign that you haven't used it recently enough.

Just as important as having the software is making sure its virus definitions — the frequently updated information that anti-virus software uses to recognise a virus — are recent. The best way to do this is to check for definition updates regularly. If you use a product that has an automatic update feature (all the programs described in "Select your shield" do), make sure it's turned on and set to a frequent update schedule. Weekly updates should be adequate for most users, but if your computing involves accessing lots of files from lots of sources — whether via e-mail, file servers, or web downloads — then daily updates might be a better idea.

Stay alert. Don't open unexpected e-mail attachments until you've confirmed that they're from the sender they appear to be from. Research from Sophos shows that one in 18 e-mails circulating during the month of November 2004 contained viruses.



Most malicious scripts affect only Windows machines, so if you click on one by accident, nothing will happen. However, if you use Microsoft Word or Excel, you're vulnerable to some platform-agnostic macro viruses. Protect yourself by turning on the Warn Before

Opening A File That Contains Macros option in each program (under program name: Preferences: Security), but be aware that not all macros are malicious. The person who sent you the document might have included a useful macro on purpose.

To further reduce the risk of infections, don't download free software or shareware from anywhere but reputable sources. — Mark H. Anbinder

You're vulnerable to Windows viruses if you run emulation software.

TRUE. If you're running Microsoft's Virtual PC or another emulation product and running Windows, your Windows environment is susceptible to all the maladies that a stand-alone Windows PC is. Virtual PC and similar tools don't merely let you access Windows-created documents and run software intended for Windows machines; you're actually running the Windows operating system.

Virtual PC, real viruses. You can minimise the risk by keeping your Windows environment meticulously up-to-date via Windows Update, by turning on the built-in firewall in Windows XP's

Security Center, or by installing your own firewall. (Yes, that might mean running a Mac firewall and a Windows firewall.)

Also helpful is avoiding some of the security holes that leave Windows users open to viruses and other malware. For starters, don't use Virtual PC's Virtual Switch network setting, which lets your virtual Windows computer act as though it were hooked directly to your network. If you put Windows right on your network with its own IP address, it's vulnerable to any network-based attacks, such as those that exploit Windows file-sharing vulnerabilities. (Once

Select your shield

The number of viruses affecting Macs remains very small. Still, we mustn't be lulled into a false sense of security. Installing and using anti-virus software is important.

For some people, the decision has been made by a company or school, or by the free copy of McAfee Virex that comes with a .Mac subscription. For the rest of us, choices include Intego's VirusBarrier X 10.1.1, McAfee's Virex 7.5.1, Sophos's Anti-Virus 3.87, and Symantec's Norton AntiVirus 9.02 (see the table "Anti-virus software compared" for details).

Scanning for trouble. Anti-virus software helps keep Macs secure by scanning files as you access them and scanning folders or entire hard drives as requested. It then helps you deal with any oddities the scans may find. Clear information is important, as are tools for repairing or removing infected files.

Getting started. For the most part, installing each anti-virus product requires just a couple of clicks. The biggest glitch I

faced was with Virex: it failed to install on a hard drive because Symantec AntiVirus was once installed there long ago. Support for the .Mac version of Virex is available only online; it took me a few days to get help.

Scanning. A good anti-virus program provides feedback as it scans so you know what's up, and it allows you to keep working while it scans. The fastest program by far was VirusBarrier — it scanned almost 40,000 documents, inside a variety of nested folders, in about five minutes, and then in about a minute on subsequent passes in Turbo mode. Although it wasn't as quick with the initial scan, Sophos Anti-Virus performed well on subsequent scans, zipping over unchanged files in a fraction of the time that the other programs took.

Configuration and updates. The programs vary when it comes to the ease of setting options — for instance, scheduling downloads of new virus definitions. I was happiest with Virex because I could access all the program's options — including its scheduling application, Virex Scheduler — from within the main user interface instead of going to System Preferences.

Up-to-date definitions. Current virus definitions are critical.



Zap! From VirusBarrier X's main window, you can quickly repair or review one or more files from the list of scanning results.

Windows has been compromised, portions of your Mac's hard drive that have been shared within Virtual PC might be accessible.)

Instead, use Virtual PC's shared-networking scheme. (Select Shared Networking in the Networking tab of each virtual PC's Settings dialog box.) This offers protection similar to that of a company firewall or a home broadband router, separating your computer from the internet at large.

Finally, if you're running Windows, you need anti-virus software installed in Windows, not just on the Mac side. — MHA

Mac users don't need to worry about spyware.

TRUE. Breathe a long sigh of relief. Spyware — programs that record information, such as browsing habits or keystrokes, and send it to a remote server — runs rampant on Windows, but there are currently no real spyware programs that affect the Mac. There are several programs that can monitor what you do by taking screenshots at different times and recording your keystrokes (for example, Camp Software's KeystrokeRecorder X, Red Byte Software's MonitorerX Pro 2.0, and Rampell

Norton AntiVirus's excellent LiveUpdate tool obtains the latest updates from Symantec's central servers, according to your schedule. Unfortunately, its oddly shaped window sits in front of all other programs unless you hide it.

Sophos Anti-Virus is designed for workgroups. So instead of downloading definitions directly to each Mac, you download an update once to a server and then point your computers to the update location to load it. While this comes in handy if you want to grab each update from the net once for a large group of users, the Sophos implementation works only if you have a Windows 2000 or XP server. The utility that manages the Sophos client software, Enterprise Manager, provides only definitions to the Mac clients. It can't monitor the Macs for infections as it does the Windows machines.

Sophos says that it has plans for a stand-alone Mac client that can obtain updates from the company's servers. For now Mac-centric companies must add a local Windows computer to handle automatic updating. Sophos is also working on a version of its Windows-based management software that can communicate with Mac clients.

What if there's a virus? The ideal anti-virus tool protects you from viruses but doesn't keep you from your data. It warns you about viruses it finds, informs you of ramifications and options, and then lets you proceed accordingly. VirusBarrier and Sophos Anti-Virus do a good job of scanning files in the background as they're accessed. Both warn you if they find something and give you the immediate options of repairing or deleting the infected

file. VirusBarrier is my pick for scanning files manually or on a schedule. If it finds infected files, you can select one or more from the list of results and then click on the Reveal In Finder button or the Repair button (see the screenshot "Zap!"). Sophos Anti-Virus lists results, too, but you can't do anything with the list. You must change the software's mode from just scanning to scan-and-repair, and then run the process again.

Overall, the programs did a good job of finding viruses on my test drive. But Norton AntiVirus missed PC viruses entirely — only when I dragged my e-mail attachments folder to the program's Dock icon did the software find and quarantine them. Symantec's customer support provided no help. Media contacts diagnosed that the program had aborted its scan before it had finished, without any indication. It turned out that the software was confused by unusual folder permissions.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Any of these programs will provide the basic protection every Mac user needs. Norton AntiVirus is a reasonable contender for personal or group use, and it integrates well with other Symantec tools. Businesses should keep an eye on Sophos Anti-Virus, which has potential as a workgroup protector. Virex will do if you've already paid for it via a .Mac subscription, but installation issues and poor support prevent it from being our top choice. That spot is reserved for Intego VirusBarrier X. Its attractive interface, turbo performance, and clear handling of virus infections make it a winner. ● Mark H. Anbinder

Anti-virus software compared

| COMPANY | PRODUCT | RATING | PRICE | HOT LINKS | COMMENTS |
|----------|-------------------------|--------|---|--|---|
| Intego | VirusBarrier X 10.1.1 # | ★★★★ | one user, \$99; five users, \$299 ten users, \$549 | www.techtools.com.au | Attractive interface and fast scans, especially on unchanged files; clear warnings when viruses are found or infected files are opened. |
| McAfee | Virex 7.5.1 | ★★★ | included with Mac membership; single user \$69.50, 5-50 users \$51.50 per user | www.pica.com.au | Easy-to-access configuration; no visible progress indicator during scans; refuses to install if there are traces of other anti-virus tools remaining. |
| Sophos | Anti-Virus 3.87 | ★★½ | five users, \$249; ten users, \$399; 25 users, \$799 | www.sophos.com.au | Fast scanner, but updates require a manual download or a Windows server; shows a list of infected files, but you can't do anything with the list. |
| Symantec | Norton Anti-Virus 9.02 | ★★★ | \$130; multi-user licenses not available in Australia | www.symantec.com.au | Provides easy access to updates; good handling of detected viruses; occasionally misses some viruses when scanning entire drive. |

= Editors' Choice.

Software's TypeRecorder X 2 – see “Hot links”). These programs are designed for people who want to monitor the activity of their Mac's users: businesses, schools, or parents may purchase and install these programs to keep tabs on employees, students, or children.

If you're a non-administrative user of a Mac on which an administrator has installed this type of program, there's not much you can do about it: you're not allowed to remove the software, since you don't have administrative rights. The best you can do is ask why it's there. — Kirk McElhearn

Sending chat messages is akin to throwing notes on loosely wadded paper across a crowded classroom.

TRUE. If you use any of the popular instant-messaging applications for OS X – iChat, AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), and MSN Messenger – your messages can be read easily by someone watching your network traffic. That sounds like the work of sophisticated computer hackers, but



all it takes is access to your network (in your company, at home, or at a public Wi-Fi location, for example) and a packet-sniffing utility such as Brian Hill's MacSniffer or Stairways Software's Interarchy (see “Hot links”). Terminal wizards can use the Unix command `tcpdump`.

For example, the window at the left of the screenshot “Network obfuscation” displays a snippet of text sent by iChat as it appears in Interarchy's Traffic window. Looking past the HTML coding (which iChat uses to define balloon colour and text formatting) and «spc» markers (spaces), you can see that the message reads, “It is easier to introduce new complications than to resolve the old ones.”

Keeping risk in perspective. Before you swear off instant messaging forever, ask yourself a few questions. Is it really likely that someone is scanning your network's data packets? You're probably safer chatting with a friend from a single Mac at home than from a laptop connected to a free Wi-Fi network in a busy coffee shop. Also, does your conversation contain top-secret information? If most of your chats concern lunch options, you probably needn't worry.

8 ways to protect your Mac right now

While most people worry about hackers accessing their Macs over a network, it's much easier for someone to just walk up to a computer and browse its files. That's especially true if it's a laptop, or if it's in an office or another space where people mill around. Here are eight ways to protect your Mac:

1 Turn off automatic login. When you choose automatic login, you get to skip entering your password when you start up your Mac. Automatic login also allows anyone to start up your Mac and access your files. If you have it turned on, go to OS X's Accounts preference pane, click on Login Options, and deselect Automatically Log In As user name.

2 Require a password for waking your Mac from sleep or a screen saver. Your screen saver looks cool and hides your work, but anyone can press a key to deactivate it and get total access to your Mac. The same is true when your Mac is asleep. Protect against this by going to OS X's Security preference pane and selecting Require Password To Wake This Computer From Sleep Or Screen Saver.

3 Lock your Keychain. It's handy that the Mac's Keychain application stores your passwords for web pages, network volumes, e-mail accounts, and

more. Even better, when you browse the web, the Keychain can help Safari autofill password fields without asking for any confirmation.

What happens if you step away from your desk? Someone else could access everything from your online banking site, to your .Mac e-mail, to accounts at online retailers — without needing to know your passwords.

Protect yourself by changing your Keychain settings. Open Keychain Access in the Applications: Utilities folder. Select your keychain (usually your user name) in the drawer (click on Show Keychains in the toolbar if it's not visible). Then choose Edit: Change Settings For Keychain keychain name. Select Lock After 5 Minutes Of Inactivity, or change the time limit to one minute if you're really paranoid. Then select Lock When Sleeping for more security.

4 Change your Keychain password. By default, the Keychain password is the same password you use to log in to your Mac. Even if you're the only administrator, others could potentially start up your computer with an OS X installation CD and reset the administration password. If they did that, they could reset all the user account passwords and effectively access your keychain. To protect against this, you need a Keychain password that's different from your user password. Open the Keychain Access application, and select your keychain in the drawer. Select Edit: Change Password For Keychain keychain name, and then enter a new password.

It's when you're discussing information that's private or proprietary that chatting can become the weak link your competition is waiting for.

Can software help? Fortunately, there are several ways to make your chats private. iChat users can purchase Intego's ChatBarrier X3 10.3.2. If both chat participants are running ChatBarrier X3, a padlock icon will indicate that the connection is secure. Someone using packet-sniffing software will see only encrypted text (as shown in the right-hand "Network obfuscation" screenshot).

Another option is to use software that's designed to deliver encrypted text. BitWise (see "Hot links") encrypts every message. However, you can use it to chat only with other BitWise users. If that won't do, the open-source Fire client (see "Hot links") not only lets you chat securely with other Fire users but also lets you have unencrypted chats with others.

Finally, if you just need to send snippets of secure information, consider encrypting individual messages with a program such as PGP — which stands for "Pretty Good Privacy" (see "Hot links").



Recipients of PGP-encrypted messages must decrypt the text on their end. (Think super-secret decoder ring.) — Jeff Carlson

When I'm using a wireless network at home, I'm totally safe.

TRUE AND FALSE

Wireless Wi-Fi networks use radio waves, which often extend well beyond the four walls of your home. That's no big deal if most of the inhabitants of your neighbourhood are insects, but if you live in an apartment building or a dense urban area, it's easy for a neighbour or a visitor to a nearby business to hop onto the network. Less frequently, people might make it their mission to enter your network and try to access your computers.

Because you're not a Windows user, there's no current need to worry about people on your AirPort network corrupting your computer with viruses or malevolent programs. So far, there's no such animal that doesn't also require an administrative password. You should be concerned, though, if your network has no protection. In that

5 Store your sensitive files in an encrypted disk image. If you have only a handful of sensitive files, as opposed to a Home folder chock-full of top-secret information, it's easy to store them in a password-protected encrypted disk image. When you want to mount an encrypted disk image, you need to enter a password. When you're finished working with its files, just eject the disk image.

6 Completely erase sensitive files. If you've worked on files that you don't want others to see, you can delete them when you've finished. But they aren't completely deleted — bits and pieces of your files remain on your hard disk, and some file-recovery programs could let another user access them. To delete sensitive files completely, select Finder: Secure Empty Trash. This not only deletes the files but also overwrites them so no one can get at them with file-recovery software.

7 Use FileVault. The ultimate level of protection for your files is encryption. In addition to storing some files in an encrypted disk image (as explained earlier), FileVault, the feature built into Panther that encrypts your Home folder, provides total protection even if someone steals your Mac and removes your hard disk. However, an administrator can reset the FileVault password, so your files are not protected from everyone unless you're the administrator. (Your user password opens FileVault, so if you've left automatic login on, this protection isn't worth squat.)

To access FileVault, go to the Security preference pane. FileVault creates an encrypted disk image of your entire Home folder; instead of you creating one manually and moving individual files into it, the operating system handles this, mounting the disk image when you log in and unmounting it when you log out. When you use FileVault, all your files are encrypted — your photos, music files, movies, and anything else in your user folder.

Early versions of Panther had problems with FileVault that caused data loss, but Apple seems to have resolved these, and FileVault seems safe to use now.

8 Set an Open Firmware password. As the truly paranoid know, there are three ways to get around a login password: start up the Mac from an OS X installation CD, boot a Mac in target mode while it's connected to another Mac, or start up a Mac from a network server. So if someone gets physical access to your Mac and has the right tools, he or she can access anything that's not encrypted.

If you want to prevent users from gaining such access, you can set a low-level password that must be entered even before your Mac begins booting. Open Firmware is special code that isn't part of OS X — it's actually in a chip in your Mac. Like a PC's BIOS, this chip runs before anything else at startup.

It's not infallible, but it provides solid protection when your Mac lives in a location that's accessible to the public. See the Apple technical article "Setting up Open Firmware Password Protection in Mac OS X 10.1 or Later," (link in "Hot links"), for more on setting an Open Firmware password. ● Kirk McElhearn

Raise the wall



OS X's built-in firewall is good enough to protect most Mac users from hacker attacks. It doesn't have many bells and whistles and isn't very easy to customise though. To find out whether you can get better protection from third-party firewall applications, we teamed up with AV-Test to test Intego's NetBarrier X3 10.3, Pliris's FireWalk X2, Symantec's Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 (NPF), Sustainable Softworks' IPNetSentry X, and OS X's built-in firewall (see the table "Firewall software compared" for details).

None of these third-party programs was a huge improvement over OS X's built-in firewall option. NetBarrier, while pricey, provided the greatest protection, as well as an easy-to-configure interface. It's worth noting that Intego also sells a suite called Internet Security Barrier Platinum Edition that includes NetBarrier as well as VirusBarrier and several other utilities for \$219 — less than the price of its Firewall and Virus packages sold separately.

Hacker-proof protection. With the exception of NPF and FireWalk X2, each program stealthed all ports, effectively hiding the Mac from attackers. NPF closed but did not stealth ports 0 and 1; that didn't change even when the application was set to maximum security. While those two ports couldn't be hacked into, they did allow the computer to be seen. By default, FireWalk X2 leaves both port 427 and port 548 open — these are ports used by AppleShare — but we were able to disable them manually.

Of the five applications, only NetBarrier alerted us to possible external attacks. The program was sometimes a bit overzealous. For example, it opened a dialog box and issued a loud buzz every time a Telnet server on the network tried to determine whether a session we'd opened was still alive. Fortunately, it was easy to add the server to a white list, or list of acceptable servers, and stop the alerts.

During port scans, all the firewalls told the scanner which operating system was being used — a potential clue as to how to attack the computer. None of the applications alerted us when the computer joined a new network, changed dial-up accounts, or switched to an insecure wireless connection.

Only NetBarrier was able to detect software that was illegally attempting to connect to the internet, which many malware programs do. NetBarrier also detected when a program's name had been changed in order to gain access to legitimately open ports. NPF was able to detect applications attempting to open closed ports.

With the exception of NPF and IPNetSentry X, all the applications evaded attempts to deactivate them while they were active. All but IPNetSentry X couldn't be deleted from the hard drive.

Ease of use. It's easy enough to turn on OS X's built-in firewall: all you have to do is click on a button. However, you can't access some features except through Terminal or by using a third-party program such as Brian Hill's BrickHouse (see "Hot links"). NPF and NetBarrier are by far the easiest programs to configure. Each runs you through a simple setup process, and lets you easily adjust settings. FireWalk X2 also had an easy setup process, but changing and maintaining firewall settings after the fact is much less straightforward and may be intimidating for users with little or no knowledge of firewalls. As for IPNetSentry X, its drag-and-drop installation is easy enough, but only a dedicated gearhead could love its difficult user interface.

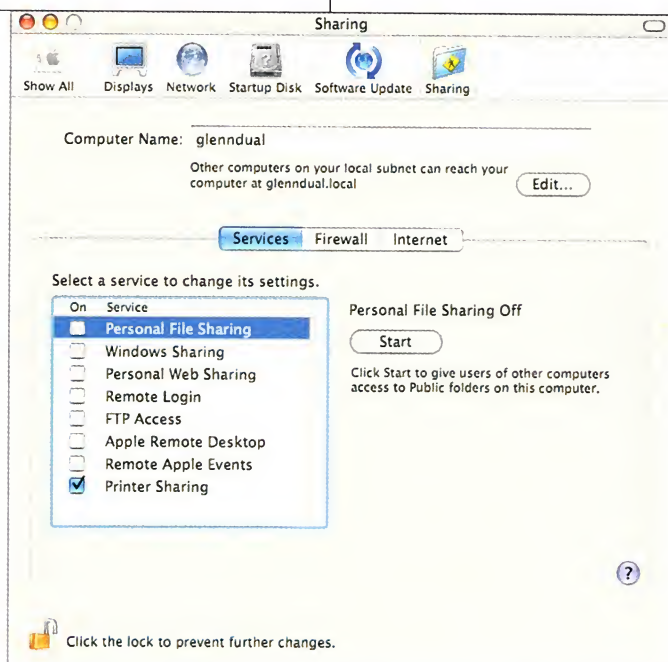
Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're looking to save a bit of money and are willing to forgo extras and configuration ease, OS X's built-in firewall can handle most of your firewall needs. Although considerably more expensive, Intego's NetBarrier X3 offers a more user-friendly interface, significantly more intelligent intrusion detection, and better overall protection than any of the other firewall applications currently being offered. ● Jeffery Battersby

Firewall software compared

| COMPANY | PRODUCT | RATING | PRICE | CONTACT | Reveals OS during port scans | Issues alert when switching networks | Checks for unauthorized internet connections | Leaves ports open by default | Comments |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| Apple Computer | built-in OS X firewall | ★★★ | included as part of OS X | www.apple.com | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | Free; effective for most users; many features accessible only through Terminal. |
| Intego | NetBarrier X3 10.3 # | ★★★ 1/2 | \$109 | www.techtools.com.au | ● | ○ | ● | ○ | Best overall protection; simple user interface; detects unauthorized internet connections and programs; easy setup process; overzealous alerts. |
| Pliris | FireWalk X2 | ★★★ 1/2 | \$US35 | www.pliris-soft.com | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | Easy initial setup process; nice user interface; inexpensive; ongoing maintenance is intimidating. |
| Symantec | Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 | ★★★ | \$130 | www.symantec.com.au | ● | ○ | ○ | ● | Alerts users to applications attempting to open closed ports; simple user interface; easy setup process; can be removed from memory while active. |
| Sustainable Softworks | IPNetSentry X | ★★ | \$US40 | www.sustworks.com | ● | ○ | ○ | ○ | Easy initial setup; can be removed from memory and deleted from hard drive while active; difficult user interface. |

= Editors' Choice. ● = yes, ○ = no.

AV-Test (www.av-test.org) tested these firewalls using Mac OS X 10.3.6 on a Power Mac, a PowerBook, and an iBook with LAN, wireless, and dial-up connections.



Controlling the airwaves. If you don't want uninvited guests hopping onto your wireless network and browsing your public folders, turn off file-sharing services.

case, someone could try to connect to your computers and browse your shared folders.

By default, guests can connect only to the Public folder in each user's Home directory, which means they can see only files that you've placed there on purpose. If you don't want uninvited guests to access that, secure your computers. Go to System Preferences: Sharing: Services, and turn off Personal File Sharing, Windows Sharing, Personal Web Sharing, and FTP Access.

Locking down the airwaves If you don't want to risk anyone connecting to your computer, turn on wireless security. Under AirPort, you can enable WEP (Wired Equivalent Privacy). It's not the best security standard, but it will rebuff all but determined crackers. If you use AirPort Extreme and all of your computers are running Panther or Windows XP, you can opt for the stronger WPA (Wi-Fi Protected Access). Here's how to turn WEP or WPA on:

1. Launch AirPort Admin Utility (Applications: Utilities).
2. Connect to your base station. (Configure all base stations this way if you have more than one with the same settings.)
3. Click on Change Wireless Security.
4. Choose WPA Personal or 128-bit WEP.
5. For WPA, enter a long passphrase that contains letters and numbers in the Network Password field, and verify it by re-entering it in Verify Password. A phrase like "M*y c@t hAZZ fleez9!" is better than "My cat has fleas." The former has no words a cracker can discover using a dictionary attack (when a program tries to find a password by combing through and combining all the words in a dictionary).



6. Click on OK.

7. Click on Update to restart the base station.

On each computer that connects to this base station, use the AirPort menu to connect, choose the method of encryption that you chose in the AirPort Admin Utility, and enter the passphrase. Change it regularly for greater security. — Glenn Fleishman

When I'm using a public hotspot, all of my passwords are being stolen.

TRUE. It's not literally true that your passwords for e-mail, FTP (File Transfer Protocol), and web sites are always being nabbed whenever you use Wi-Fi in a coffee shop, a hotel lobby, or an airport. The potential is just so high that you might as well consider it to be true.

People connecting to the same Wi-Fi network can see all the data passing over it if they have readily available free packet-sniffing software installed, and they can snatch your passwords, e-mail messages, and files out of the air.

Safe passage for particular data. If you lug a laptop around for business or for pleasure, you can secure your internet activities

Security, NSA style



From breaking codes to collecting intelligence on terrorist organisations, America's National Security Agency (NSA) is paid to be really paranoid. See "Hot links" to download its guide to bullet-proof OS X security in pdf form.

one by one. For instance, encrypt your e-mail using a web mail service that supports SSL (Secure Sockets Layer) for browsing or that can secure POP, IMAP, and SMTP with SSL. All

major Mac e-mail clients include SSL support. In Apple's Mail, go to the Accounts pane in Preferences and select the Use SSL option in Account Information: Server Settings (outgoing e-mail) and the Advanced tab (incoming e-mail). Another option is FastMail (free to \$US40 per year, depending on service level; see "Hot links"), which offers secure browsing and secure e-mail.

Web designers often need to transfer files to update web sites while on the road. You can encrypt FTP using SFTP (Secure FTP). If you're running your own FTP server on OS X, turn on SSH (Secure Shell) on the machine that has the file repository. Go to System Preferences: Sharing: Services and turn on Remote Login and FTP Access. There is an increasingly large number of web hosts that also support SFTP for transferring files. You need an SFTP-equipped FTP program such as Interarchy, too, on the computer that's connected to your repository.

When you shop or bank online, your data is almost always already secured with SSL. If you hate the idea of your surfing being observed, use a service such as Secure-Tunnel (see "Hot links"), which offers free anonymous surfing. Secure surfing costs \$US8 per month.

Private networks in public places. If you want a more comprehensive way to protect your wireless activities when you're out and about, consider securing your sessions with a virtual private network (VPN) connection. A VPN encrypts all the data that enters and leaves a computer over a network connection, such as AirPort, preventing all snooping.

VPNs aren't just for corporations anymore. OS X Server 10.3 (Panther) includes both flavours of VPN servers currently in wide use. The regular version of Panther includes a VPN client. (Go to Applications: Internet Connect, and select File: New VPN Connection). — GF

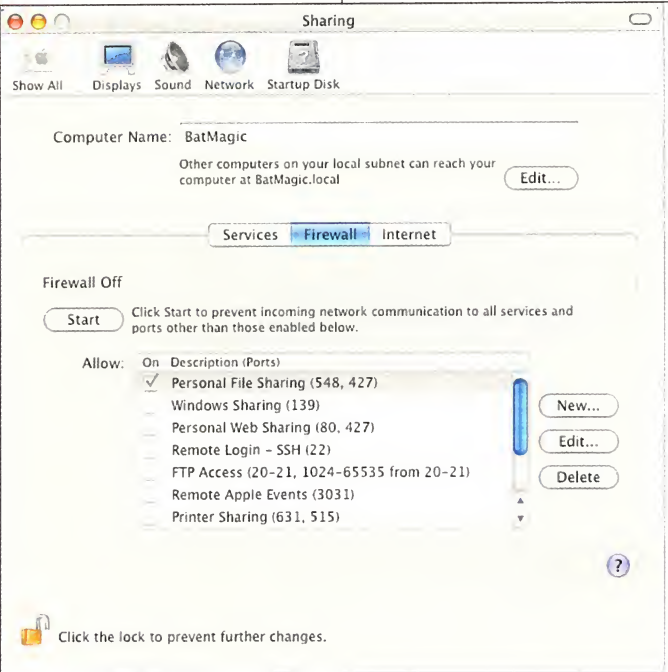
The Mac's default security settings are all you need to protect your computer from hacker attacks.

FALSE. Hackers attempt to attack your computer over the internet by finding open, unsecured ports and exploiting them. A port is nothing more than a door through which computer data can be passed. Every computer has thousands of them, and every open port is a potential entry point.

Mind you, open ports are a necessary part of your daily computer experience. Every time you open a web page, you're using port 80. Every e-mail you send goes through port 25. Sharing your iTunes music library? You're using port 3689. Open isn't necessarily bad — as long as your Mac's operating system and the application using the port verify that only legitimate data is being passed through those ports.

Hackers attempt to find open ports by trolling the net, sending out messages that your Mac understands as "Hey, anybody there?" When such messages hit your Mac (even if they hit a closed port), it behaves like a puppy dog, happily barking back, "Yep, I'm here!" That response lets hackers know there's something out there they can attempt to exploit. They'll then use port-scanning software to discover an open door they can get into.

To prevent this from happening, you need a firewall. A firewall is simply a piece of software or hardware that stands between your computer and the rest of the world, making sure that every



Built-in security. Many users who have an always-on connection to the internet need to turn on OS X's built-in firewall to protect against hackers. Go to the Firewall tab under OS X's Sharing preference pane, and click on Start.

piece of data coming or leaving through an open port on your Mac goes only where it's supposed to.

OS X has a firewall that's turned off by default (see the screenshot "Built-in security"). You can change that by going to System Preferences: Sharing: Firewall, and then clicking on the Start button. Frankly, there's no reason not to turn the firewall on if you always have your Mac connected to the internet. As soon as you start the firewall, all the ports on your Mac are stealthed. Stealthing a port makes your Mac behave like your high-school crush who ignored you no matter how many times you tried to make small talk. You made your presence known, but you weren't even getting the time of day. Any legitimate ports that are open on your Mac will allow data to pass through and work normally, but to the rest of the world, your Mac becomes invisible.

Mac attacks



Still wearing a smug look because so few viruses affect the Mac? It's not unjustified. No virus outbreaks affected Mac users in 2004, and the other security incidents in our recent past are largely hypothetical:

■ **MP3Concept (April 2004).** Intego confused the Mac community by announcing that VirusBarrier would protect against the "first Trojan horse" affecting Mac OS X. In fact, a harmless proof-of-concept utility, not an actual Trojan horse, had been developed.

■ **Opener (October 2004).** A malicious shell script first reported on MacInTouch, Opener disables a Mac's firewall, turns on file sharing, creates a new user account with admin privileges, and more, but only if the Mac's user installs and runs the script and enters an administrator password when prompted to do so. Enter your administrator password only if you know why you're being asked to and only if you trust the source of the software that's asking!

Your defense? Security updates. Meanwhile, Apple has patched a number of vulnerabilities that haven't yet been exploited. For instance, Security Update 2004-05-24 prevents the inadvertent execution of malicious code via certain types of URLs, and it adds a warning before launching an application for the first time as the result of double-clicking on a document.

Always stay on top of OS X's Software Update feature. To make sure that you have it turned on and set to check weekly or daily, go to the Software Update preference pane in System Preferences. ● Mark H. Anbinder

However, for some people, the Mac's built-in firewall isn't the best option. To find out if you're one of those users, see the sidebar "Raise the wall." — Jeffery Battersby

TRUE. Your personal information is in danger when you surf the web.

Not, perhaps, in the way you think. Most people imagine some nondescript virtual basement, where slovenly hackers work in the dark, drinking Jolt cola and waiting for you to slip up so they can get at your bank statements, credit card numbers, and passwords.

More often, your surfing will result in the smaller annoyance of spam. For instance, some sites require that you register, and then they sell your e-mail address to others. The best way to prevent this is to create disposable e-mail addresses that you can use when you register. If you have a .Mac subscription, for example, you can create aliases, which are different e-mail addresses that funnel mail into your account. These are linked to your main e-mail account, and you can delete them at any time.

Be John or Jane Doe. Another option is to avoid registering by using a service such as BugMeNot.com (see "Hot links"). If you go to this web site, you can find user names and passwords for all sorts of web sites. These aren't shopping sites — you won't find someone's user name and password for Amazon.com. You will find the login information required to access newspapers and other information sites that use registration to track what you view.

Fooled by phishing. More-serious security breaches usually happen because you've inadvertently given your data to the wrong person. For instance, phishing is when malevolent people send e-mail messages pretending to be eBay, PayPal, your bank, and so on. The message asks you to "confirm" your account by entering your username and password, credit card number, or other sensitive information.



Surf incognito. If you'd rather not register at web sites — and risk a boatload of spam — try a service such as Bugmenot.com. It provides you with dummy user names and passwords for common sites. Bugmenot has a handy bookmarklet that you can use in Safari.

These messages try to trick you into giving your personal information away so hackers can exploit it. Don't ever click on a link in an e-mail like this. Also, turn off HTML display in your e-mail program so you can check the validity of such links. For example, if you get a message from eBay or PayPal that asks you to enter your information, look at the actual link. Very often, you'll see that it contains a domain name in a country such as Korea or Russia (.kr or .ru), or you'll see a numerical address, such as 192.168.123.456 instead of www.ebay.com. If you're ever in doubt, go directly to the web site in question and contact customer support to confirm the message you receive. ● KM

As long as you have separate user accounts, your personal information is safe when you share your Mac with others.

FALSE. OS X uses file permissions to keep track of who can read, write, and execute each file on the Mac. This is essential because it ensures that one user can't access another's files. The system depends on the computer's administrator, who has total control over all the files and who must set up permissions correctly. You can't completely protect your files unless you are the only administrator.

Even if you're the only administrator, or if your administrator has set up user accounts very carefully, others can access your stuff unless you're careful. For instance, anyone in your office or home can saunter up to your desk, sit down, and start searching through your personal documents if you walk away without logging out. Anyone with an OS X installation CD can start up your Mac with that CD and use its utilities to reset the administrator password.

If you have any truly sensitive files on your Mac — from company financial plans to your top-secret spy stuff — the best way to protect them from prying eyes is to encrypt them (see the sidebar "8 ways to protect your Mac right now"). ● KM





Networking the neighbours

For most people, fronting up at a new neighbour's door and delivering your best "hi-diddly-ho" has lost most of its appeal. Nobody wants to be the neighbourhood Ned Flanders, and as a result, few of us know who lives on our streets. The downside, of course, is that the tradition of borrowing next door's motor-mower is correspondingly dropping away.

A few months ago, I wrote about Orkut, a social networking web site created by a Google employee to help people make new friends of like interests. The site is based on the concept of meeting "friends of your friends" online.

In practice, it doesn't really work. Having joined Orkut some time back, I recently logged in and was greeted with the rather confronting message that I was connected to 3,898,927 people through nine friends. That sounds cool, but isn't actually very useful. I'm a little retiring at the best of times; the thought of four million people just behind the screen of my PowerBook doesn't do much for me.

Now, some clever entrepreneurs have made the concept of online social networking more useful by scaling it back a bit – to your apartment building, street, or neighbourhood.

The idea is you sign up at one of these web sites, find or register your locality. Then you print out a flyer which you letter-box drop to your neighbours, encouraging them to join the web site. If enough of them do, you can get a neighbourhood online community going to get to know about other people who live nearby informally, gripe about the hoons roaring down the street in the dead of night, or organise a neighbourhood barbeque.

The potential for the concept is interesting. Instead of every house in a street having to buy a lawnmower just to mow the grass once a month, people could rent out their lawnmowers to neighbours by advertising it on the neighbourhood web site.

This isn't quite as far-fetched as it sounds. In New York City, the residents of 500 apartment buildings have embraced the concept enthusiastically for getting to know each other and sharing their resources.

Jarred Nissim, the entrepreneur behind one of the more popular web sites, MeetTheNeighbors.org, had the idea after running "The Lunch Club," a way for singles living in New York to meet each other over a meal – not for dating, simply to get to know other people.

He also mused on the popularity of the bare-bones free classifieds web site Craigslist.com, which started off as an informal way



Hot Links

www.orkut.com
Google's social networking site
www.meettheneighbors.org
Meet people near you
mac.meetup.com
Meet Mac fans near you!

for San Francisco residents to hear about cool stuff in the area but soon took off as a free classifieds web site for anything and everything worldwide, with Craigslist sites in many major cities.

Meet The Neighbors' frequently asked questions list explains the difference between it and Orkut best: "We are not just another site where you register, create a profile and get cast into the 'networking sea' to fish for contacts and people you have stuff in common with. Meet The Neighbors is about real-life, in-person, face-to-face relationships with your actual, physical neighbours — not random strangers in cyberspace".

N2N music swapping. If you haven't got much interest in sharing your lawnmower around the 'hood (though I'd certainly encourage anyone in the Rozelle/Balmain NSW area to register their lawnmower, as my lawn is very overgrown), you might be

interested in a new Mac program that's leading the charge in letting people publish their libraries of DVDs, CDs and books for friends to browse and borrow.

Delicious Library, made by two guys who reportedly work out of a coffee shop, has taken \$US250,000 in shareware registrations in the first few months of its release.

I touched on it in Off the net last month, noting its purpose was to allow people to create a visual catalogue of their stuff quickly, using their iSight to scan barcodes on books, music and DVDs, and pulling information and pictures from Amazon.com.

The first version already has the ability to "check out" items lent to friends and family. A second version in the pipeline will allow catalogues to be shared with other Delicious Library users. Like Meet The Neighbors, it will be location aware, so that users can search a street/suburb/locality to see who has what. A (non-location-aware) version is already available in the form of a crude web-publishing add-on from a Delicious Library user called DeliciWeb.

I admit, all this does sound a little pie-in-the-sky. But frankly, I'm betting that I'll be able to find someone who has the Nick Drake CD I've been looking for through Delicious Library before I'll be able to buy it on Apple's vapourware iTunes Music Store Australia.

If whoever has the CD also owns a lawnmower they can lend me, I'll be sold on the concept. ☺



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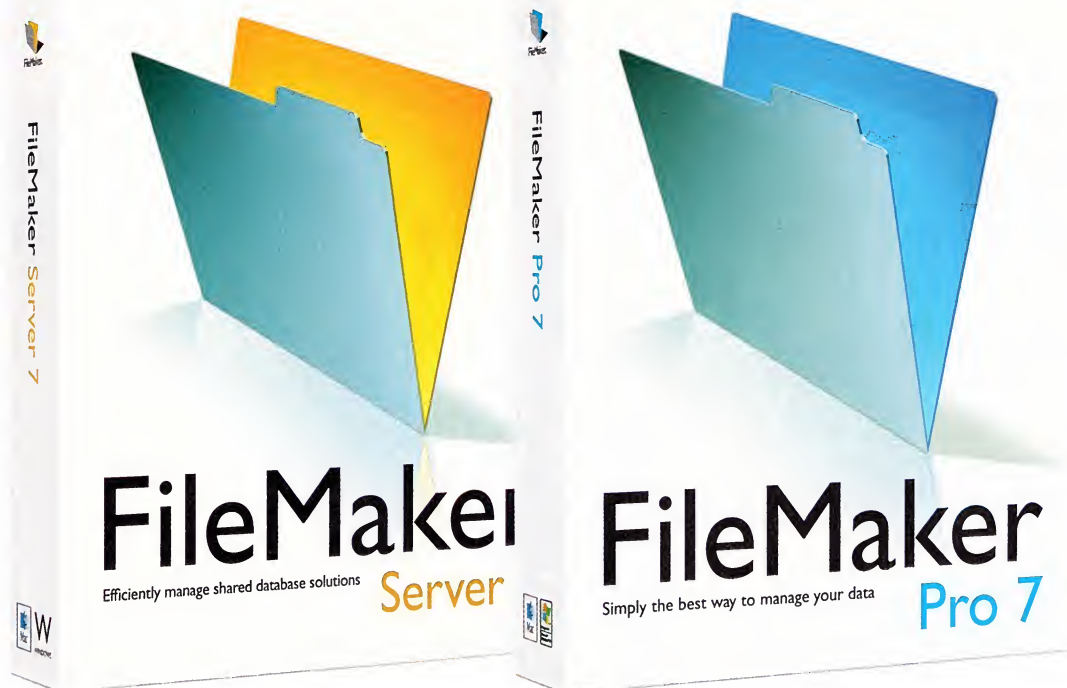
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03.2005

The Hub

YOUR DIGITAL LIFESTYLE



PHOTO PRINTERS COME OF AGE

HIFIDELIO SPREADS THE MUSIC • HANDS-ON WITH TREO 650 • THE YEAR OF HD

By Philip Lucas.

Snappy printing

We've become a little spoiled in recent times with the quality of cameras and printers that are available on the market. It was not always thus. I can recall the early days of colour printers and how poorly suited they were to the task of reproducing photos. Interestingly, it was during these times that dye-sublimation printers were carving out a niche for themselves as the perfect photo printers. That was what they were specifically intended for since they didn't print to anything larger than your standard happy snap (10cm x 15cm) and didn't utilise black ink, making them useless for text.

Over the years, however, this small-format photo printer market has slowly been incorporating both inkjet and dye-sublimation technologies, and the results these days are really quite remarkable. It's also become more and more cost effective to print your own photos, although the commercial options for printing digital photos are becoming more diverse.

Back in the early days of photo printing, there was a significant price barrier to doing it on your own, particularly when it came to purchasing specialised printers and the necessary consumables. Fortunately, we're reaching a bit of golden period with photo printers. Many printers are surprisingly affordable and portable, and the consumables — where printer manufacturers make the real money — are also approaching pricing levels similar to commercial photo labs.

Of course, the other trend currently dominating the photo printing industry is the possibility of not needing a computer at all (Mac or PC) to do your printing — the so-called "hubless" alternative. In fact, all the printers we looked at allow you to connect a PictBridge-compatible digital camera directly. Most of these printers include some sort of card reader, which allows you to print directly from memory cards, a great feature for people with pre-PictBridge cameras. One of

the printers we looked at, the Lexmark P315, doesn't even connect to a computer — you have to go directly from a PictBridge camera or memory card.

So things are looking pretty bright, but what solution is right for you and your Mac? I looked at units from the major photo printer manufacturers — Canon, Epson, Hewlett-Packard, Kodak, Lexmark and Olympus — and found that the competition was pretty tight.

Getting up and running. Nothing is more annoying than getting your brand new printer and not being able to figure out how to use it. Fortunately, there were virtually no problems installing the test printers on my Mac. In fact, I had them all plugged in to my machine at once (except for the Lexmark, of course).

However, I did encounter a couple of interesting issues. To understand the problem, it's worth describing how dye-sublimation printers work. Essentially, they do a number of passes in which a colour is applied to the whole page in the levels required for that image. The paper is then printed over by the next colour level. This is done for each colour (three, usually) and there's often a final coating placed over the top to help colourfast the print. This differs with the inkjet process where lines of full colour are printed, one after the other, until the image is complete.

Kodak's EasyShare Printer Dock Plus and Canon's CP400 printer are quite small, but they still require a little extra desktop space to print. That's because both of these dye-sub printers send the paper out the back of the printer during the intervening passes, meaning you have to have some clear space behind them to allow for this. Olympus's dye-sub P-10 gets around this by being significantly larger and keeping the paper within the confines of the printer.

Another thing to note is that in order to get the Kodak EasyShare Printer Dock Plus to



Hey, good looking. The Kodak EasyShare Printer Dock Plus provides an elegant solution for printing your photos, but isn't up to image quality challenge.

connect to your Mac, you need to get a Kodak-specific USB cable. This cable comes with most of Kodak's consumer-oriented digital cameras — which are designed to dock into the Printer Dock Plus — but it doesn't come with the printer itself. You can buy this cable separately for around \$25, or you can pick up one of Kodak's digital cameras.

Taking control. Many of the printers come with quite extensive software bundles to control and monitor the printer's output and ink levels. In fact, all the USB-connected printers include at least a couple of Mac applications that enable you



Where's the Mac? The "hubless" Lexmark P315 offers the convenience of printing without a computer, but the lack of control doesn't produce the best results.

to print to your printer or perform maintenance. With the inkjet printers, the Epson PictureMate and HP Photosmart 325, there were utility applications to align and clean the print head.

Lexmark's hubless P315 printer comes with a 2.5 inch colour LCD screen so that you can preview images that you want to print, either from a memory card or from a PictBridge-compatible camera. The controls are easy to use and enable you to navigate your images quickly and select which ones you want to print. You can also use the onscreen menu to check the your ink levels and also perform maintenance, such as cleaning your print head.

This was important as the inkjets were more likely to encounter problems in printing if there was a problem with the heads, something which is not an issue with the dye-subbs which don't actually possess a "print head" as such. Unfortunately, in order to clean your printer's heads and test their alignment, you need to print out pages to see how the heads are performing. As you can appreciate, this does add to the running costs for your printer since you have to use up valuable ink and paper to check your results. With the Epson PictureMate, this costs around 50 cents a page, but with the HP and Lexmark printers, you're looking at well over a dollar a page.



Excellent photos at a price. HP's Photosmart provides solid image quality, but not without assaulting your wallet.

Picture quality. Among the top criteria for picking a good photo printer, not surprisingly, is image quality. However, when looking at the line-up of printers this month, I was quite impressed with all of them and it took a bit of soul-searching to decide who took the honours here.

In terms of the best overall image quality, the laurels must go to Epson's outstanding six-colour inkjet PictureMate printer. It was consistently able to match the colour and detail in both scanned film images as well as photos taken by a variety of digital cameras, including Canon's superb EOS 10D, Pentax's excellent *ist D and the consumer-oriented FujiFilm FinePix S304. Also, the PictureMate was able to handle gradations of colour very

well, particularly with blue skies — an essential feature of many happy snaps.

Not far behind was Canon's ultra-portable CP400 printer, which is remarkable given it uses only a three-colour dye-sublimation process. The CP400 was able to match the PictureMate in terms of detail, but wasn't quite as good at matching the colour of the original photos as the PictureMate.

HP's compact photo printer, the Photosmart 325, offered quite solid performance, no doubt helped by HP's PhotoREt 3 (Resolution Enhancement) technology. The Photosmart 325 wasn't up to the colour matching abilities of the Canon and Epson printers, but handled detail very well and had a very good colour range.

Initially, I was disappointed with Olympus's P-10 photo printer. The first prints I got were flat in colour and lacked the depth of many of the other printers. Fortunately, after tweaking the driver and disabling ColorSync, I was able to get quite acceptable results. While it lacked the razor-sharp clarity of the other printers, it still performed well for most types of images, though it did have some problems handling large areas of subtle colour gradations. Lexmark's "hubless" P-315 did quite a reasonable job with most prints, but had little glitches that made me think twice about recommending. Sometimes, there

Without the digital hub



Designed for the lounge. Canon's hubless Selphy DS700 connects to your TV for slide shows and browsing your photos before printing.

More and more recently, we've been seeing photo printers that have the capability of printing photos without the need for a Mac (or PC) to get into the equation. Thanks to onboard card readers and the PictBridge standard, it's now possible to print directly from flash cards or from the cameras themselves. While there's certainly a very useful aspect to this, you do sacrifice some control over the final output. You can't tweak the colour palette how you'd like, or manipulate the curves to get the right colour balance.

That said, there's plenty of products trying to position themselves in the living room. Canon's upcoming Selphy DS700 printer is designed to be integrated into a living room (it looks quite deliberately like a CD player) and allows you not only to print directly from memory cards and PictBridge-enabled cameras, but also wirelessly (using IrDA) from mobile phones. The Selphy DS700 comes with a video-out connector, allowing you to interface the printer with

your TV. This allows you to run slideshows of your photos directly from your printer, and you can use your TV as an interface for selecting which photos you want to print out. The DS700 even comes with a remote control, so that you can perform all these functions without leaving your lounge chair.

Another truly astonishing development in the world of hubless printing is Canon's soon-to-be-released PIXMA MP-760, which incorporates the functions of printer, copier and scanner in a single device. What's particularly remarkable about the MP-760 is that it comes with a built-in film adapter unit, so you can scan your negatives and slides and then print directly to paper without ever needing to fire up your Mac. Obviously, the future seems pretty bright for hubless printing.



Ooh, what a picture. Though a little slow on the printout, few can match the very cost-effective Epson PictureMate for great image quality.

was banding visible on the prints, and details tended to be a bit muddled.

Kodak's EasyShare Printer Dock Plus was, unfortunately, a bit of mixed bag. Initially, I tested the Printer Dock Plus with Kodak's enhanced colour setting, but that just tended to make some images a bit too red. Nevertheless, some images did benefit from using this setting, especially those photos taken in flat lighting situations such as over-cast days. Despite this, images that already contained significant amounts of colour in them tended to be over-saturated when this setting was activated. Even when this setting was turned off, images tended to become a little too yellow. Perhaps most disappointing of all with the EasyShare Printer Dock Plus was its lack of sharp detail when compared with the other photo printers I looked at.

Fast on the draw. In this fast-paced modern world, we often take the speed of certain tasks for granted. Certainly, printing your photos can take a lot of time, but some of the printers I looked at were quite fast indeed.

To test the speed of these printers, I timed how long it took to print a 2.1MB JPEG image (3072 x 2048 pixel resolution) from a 1GHz G4 Power Mac over USB. The clear winner in this race was Olympus's P-10 printer, which was able to generate the image in just over 81 seconds. Kodak's EasyShare Printer Dock Plus was able to produce the image in just over 92 seconds, while the Canon CP400 got the image out in 99 seconds.

Top printer quality obviously takes time, which is why the Epson PictureMate required 136 seconds to produce the 2.1MB image. Finally, the HP Photosmart wasn't able to get the print out for 168 seconds.

The Lexmark P-315, which doesn't connect to a Mac (or PC), was the slowest of all the printers, taking 184 seconds to finish printing the test image.

It's worth pointing out, of course, that the dye-sublimation printers — the Olympus P-10, Kodak EasyShare Printer Dock Plus and Canon CP400 — were all quicker than the inkjet printers, and significantly so. If speed is important to you, then dye-sub is definitely the way to go.

Hitting the hip pocket. Perhaps one of the most important aspects of deciding whether you'll bother picking up a photo printer is how much it's going to cost to run. The printer units themselves are comparatively cheap, but you incur real costs when it comes time to refill them.

The least expensive machine to run out of the printers I examined was Epson's PictureMate. Clearly, this is an area that Epson feels is important to concentrate on;



Budget bonanza. The speedy Olympus P-10 slides in at under \$200, provides good image quality, and is surprisingly affordable.

so much so, in fact, that there's a huge sticker on the front of it telling you that each print costs just 50 cents. You can pick a 100-page print pack for the PictureMate, including a six-colour inkjet cartridge and 100 sheets of photo paper, for \$49.95.


Canon and Olympus practically tie for second in this race for they both provide large print packs for almost the same price. For \$85, Canon offers a 108-sheet print pack, which includes a printer ribbon, working out to about 79 cents a page. Olympus, on the other hand, offers a 100-page print pack for \$79.95, making each print around 80 cents.

A 40-page print pack is available for Kodak's EasyShare Printer Dock Plus, making each print cost around a dollar, twice the cost of a print from Epson's PictureMate. Next in line is Lexmark's P-315, which doesn't offer a combined printer pack that incorporates both paper and ink. Instead, you have to pick up the ink cartridge (\$31.90) and glossy paper (\$11.76 for 20 sheets) separately. Lexmark doesn't provide details on how many 10cm x 15cm pages you'll get from a single printer cartridge — it provides details for five percent coverage on A4 pages — but after printing with it, I estimated that you'd be able to get around 60 photos or so from one in cartridge. Combined, that makes each page cost around \$1.12, but that is an estimated value.

Finally, HP also doesn't provide a printer pack option for its Photosmart 325 — paper and ink must be bought separately. Again, estimating about 60 10cm x 15cm printouts for the ink cartridge (\$39), and with 20 pages of HP photo paper costing around \$16, that makes each print cost around \$1.45, making it three times more costly to run than Epson's PictureMate. It must be borne in mind that this is just an estimated cost.

The last word. There are several good options available to you if you want a snapshot printer. However, there appear to be few reasons why you wouldn't pick up Epson's PictureMate. While it is the most expensive printer in terms of initial cost, this is more than made up for in the fact that it's the cheapest printer to run. Combine that with the fact the PictureMate has the best image quality out of all the printers I saw and you have a compelling choice.

Nevertheless, it is the heaviest printer out of the ones I saw, so if you're interested in a compact and light package, then the Canon CP400 is definitely the one to go for. At just 79 cents a page, the CP400 is cost-effective, was the only printer to weigh less than a kilo, and it also produced top notch photos.

Olympus's significantly larger P-10 was initially a disappointment, but proved itself once the drivers were tweaked. What really impressed me about the P-10 was its \$199 price tag and its ability to pump out prints very quickly. And at just 80 cents a page, the P-10 is a worthwhile choice for those on a budget. 



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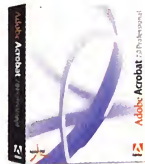
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Mac mini car installations

iTunes on the road

One announcement made at Macworld San Francisco didn't make quite the same splash as the Mac mini or iPod shuffle, but is still going to take the digital hub concept one step further: full iPod integration in new cars. Specifically, Mercedes Benz, Volvo, Nissan, Alfa Romeo and Ferrari have all announced that they will offer iPod integration with their 2005 models. BMW and Mini Cooper came on board during 2004.

The details get a little sketchy beyond the in-principle support from the manufacturers, and the announcement applies only to the US car market initially although the assumption can be made that Australian car models will follow suit, particularly those that are imported (at time of writing Apple Australia was unable to provide any more detail). The only real detail was found on the Mercedes

Benz models that will have the full feature set during 2005. In the case of Mercedes, iPod integration means exactly that: you are able to browse everything on your iPod directly from the in-dash multifunction display. You control everything from the steering wheel controls, whilst your iPod is actually docked in the glove box where it can also be charged.

If buying a Mercedes or Alfa Romeo is outside your price range, there is an ever-growing community of iPod users doing much the same thing with a range of cars. The iPod Lounge forums (see "Hot links") have an area devoted to in-car set-ups' including a lot of pictures users have posted showing the finished installation.

Even the Mac mini is starting to get recognition as an automotive accessory. A US company is already offering Mac mini instal-

lations with touch screen or LCD display. The Mac mini can be installed anywhere it will fit such as under a seat or in the boot. Because OS X has voice recognition and wireless internet, you could listen to your music on iTunes whilst browsing the web and perhaps even get some driving done at some stage.

So is anyone getting the impression that Apple is making one big impact on the automotive industry? As long as Apple continues to innovate with the iPod whilst maintaining good backwards compatibility, it is difficult to see other portable audio device manufacturers elbowing their way in, which further cements the perception that the iPod is a ubiquitous part of car audio installations. The real proof however will be when such installations become commonplace in the big selling small and medium car market. ☞

Get into the Slipstream

I have to admit something up front: I love Rogue Amoeba. The company makes good-looking, extremely functional software and sell it at very reasonable prices. At AMW we've covered previous releases such as Detour (allows you to route audio from each application to different outputs) and Audio Hijack (records audio from any application to an AIFF file). Its latest release is called Slipstream, and like its predecessors, it holds a lot of promise from a functionality viewpoint. What Slipstream does is enhance the capability of AirPort Express by getting it to allow streaming of audio from any application to the speakers you have connected to AirPort Express. This means that you can utilise AirPort Express for common tasks like Real Audio and Windows media streams.

Using an iSight? Now you can have the audio coming through your speakers.



Cooking dinner but want to hear loud and clear if an important e-mail has arrived (albeit with a slight delay)? Another obvious use would be auditioning your GarageBand creations for family and friends without needing to use your Mac's inbuilt speakers or dragging everyone up to your room to have a listen. The options are as diverse as your audio needs.

A couple of disclaimers: Slipstream won't work well if you want to play back the audio component of video clips. Rogue Amoeba cites an inherent latency in the way AirPort Express works that means you'll have a delay in audio compared to video playback. If you were really keen you could of course use an application to split the video and audio and de-synchronise them, but it all seems like too much hard work to me.

The only other negative applies to those who have multiple AirPort Expresses spread

throughout the house: version 1.0 will only support one unit. However, if you own an AirPort Express and want to maximise its functionality, Slipstream will fit the bill in more ways than one. Slipstream has the same system requirements as AirPort Express music streaming: OS 10.3 (Panther). It should be available by the time you read this, and can be downloaded directly from the Rogue Amoeba web site. At time of writing there is an introductory cost of \$US20, with usual retail at \$US25. You will be able to download a trial however, and Rogue Amoeba has its own user support forums which seem well patronised with comprehensive information. ☞



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HiFidelio

For anyone who takes his or her music listening seriously, organising your music can easily become an obsession. If you have your collection spread across multiple formats like vinyl, CD and cassette, then you have an even bigger task on your hands. HiFidelio, a product of audio company Hermstedt, may be the solution to your problems.

Essentially, the HiFidelio is the central point to which you import all your music. There are six ways of doing this: via the CD/DVD player, Ethernet, analogue audio inputs, wire-

Another interesting feature is the ability to stream different music to different satellites around the house. The satellites that you will be able to buy from Hermstedt will have integrated speakers. The HiFidelio can cope with up to five of these satellites, all streaming different music (the user requests what music they want from the satellite itself). Add that to the ability to connect your Mac to the HiFidelio as well, and you have a nice range of streaming options available to you. As far as playlists go, you can create as many as you want, based on artist, genre and so on.

quality design feature is a "smooth supply" power supply which prevents any sound distortion creeping in from the power supply. The HiFidelio's transformer also works on a low-leakage current which minimises the occurrence of ground loops.

There are only a couple of obvious downsides. One is the lack of FireWire support. This is more a personal preference thing, but I would have liked a FireWire port. You do get two USB 2.0 ports however. The other downside is the reality of importing vinyl or other old media. You will need to engage in quite a



less networking (802.11g), USB or Rendezvous. This alone makes the HiFidelio a noteworthy product as every music media format from the 45rpm vinyl record to DVD is covered, plus a very high degree of Mac friendliness to boot (more on that later). The older media formats like vinyl and cassette are imported by recording to the HiFidelio's 80-gigabyte hard drive via the analogue stereo inputs.

Of course for most of us, CDs are the main media format that would be imported, and an onboard database of two million CDs means automated registration of song data for most albums you import. The database can also be updated via the internet if you so desire. For other media you will need to enter the song and album information manually via HiFidelio's interface, the optional USB keyboard, or even via a web interface if you have your Mac networked with it.

At this stage however you cannot import your playlists from iTunes. Nor can you listen to streaming media such as Icecast although Hermstedt state a software upgrade is on the way to allow this.

So how much music can the HiFidelio store? Well that depends on the encoding format you use to import your music. The maximum you are likely to store is 19 to 20 thousand songs on the supplied 80-gigabyte hard drive. I expect though that if you are going to spend a significant amount of money on a HiFidelio, you are likely to choose one of the higher quality encoding formats in which case you can expect a lot less than twenty thousand songs. On the issue of audio formats, an impressive range is supported: AAC (MPEG4), MP3, MP3 VBR (Variable Bit Rate), Ogg Vorbis, Windows media, FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec), AIFF, WAV, CD Audio, CD-R/RW and DVD. Another audio

bit of trial and error initially to maximise the quality of what you are importing, as the end product will only be as good as what you are putting in.

On the whole this is one comprehensive music storage solution. There are certainly plenty of CD and DVD stackers out there that offer similar cataloguing features, but the networking and CD burning features put the HiFidelio in a league of its own. Although it's a higher-end solution, it will still appeal, particularly to those who haven't taken the plunge as far as importing their vinyl records or cassettes. For those individuals, the higher cost may be offset by no longer needing to buy an audio interface to achieve the same result. The Mac friendliness is also a further incentive, and it's encouraging to see such a level of Mac integration. The HiFidelio retails for \$2299 and is distributed in Australia by Vistra Systems, 02 9212 0200.



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By Anthony Fordham.



Hot Links

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Not just slim, super-slim

Hitachi high-capacity mobile hard drives

A MW has been following the development of the Treo 650 smartphone from palmOne very closely over the past few months. While the Treo 600 is a fine device, I've been keen to get my hands on some of the extra features the 650 offers.

First, the good news. As far as your Mac is concerned, the Treo 650 works pretty much the same as a regular palmOne PDA. You will have to install the new Desktop software as many tweaks are included, as well as new software and drivers.

The experience of using the smartphone component of the device is much like plugging a phone into a normal PDA, or using a Bluetooth connection. In other words, the phone component is quite separate from the PDA component. This is particularly evident in the way the phone can be "off" while the PDA is in use. Hold down the traditional red handset button and the phone activates, finds the network, and awaits your command.

At this early stage (the software is not finalised so further tweaks may emerge) the integration of the phone is a little disappointing. Rather than an integral part of the hardware, it almost feels as if you are using a software dialling program instead of accessing the phone directly.

Also, instead of being able to run the phone in the background while you continue to use the PDA, you need to bring applica-




tions into the phone interface, by adding them to a "speed dial" style list at the bottom of the screen.

The unit offers a speaker phone option, but I had a lot of trouble making myself heard over the phone's built-in microphone. The receiver reported that the volume faded in and out and there was some static. Thinking I had a poor connection, I switched back to normal handset functionality, and the problems disappeared. This may be a function of using early software, however, but it will certainly be something I will look at more closely once the final version is available.

Besides phone quibbles, the quality of the device is really excellent. Solid and sleek, the case is plastic but doesn't feel at all flimsy.

The built-in keyboard is very small, but the QWERTY layout makes thumb typing fairly easy, although having to remember three different kind of "shift" key, depending on whether you want capitals, alternate letters or punctuation, can get confusing.

All the familiar PalmOS applications are there, with the addition of VersaMail for IMAP e-mail support (see other story for more details).

The screen is extremely clear and crisp, although the built-in camera is pretty standard stuff, much like you'd see on a normal mobile phone. 

Smartphone viruses proliferate

As smartphones and PDAs continue to find mainstream success, virus developers are targeting these new devices.


F-Secure, an antivirus firm based in Finland, says it has identified a new worm that infects Windows and devices using the Symbian operating system.

Like most worms, Lasco.A is designed solely to proliferate, and is more of an "experiment" on the developer's part, rather than a virus written specifically to destroy data. However, the worm will affect performance, and more importantly will turn your device into a vector for further infection.

The worm attaches itself to SIS installation files and copies itself, most usually when two users are exchanging programs. More insidiously, the worm will keep a constant look out for discoverable Bluetooth devices in range and will try to infect those devices automatically. This means you just need to pass someone in the street with an infected PDA to get the virus.

F-Secure says the best immediate defence against the worm is to turn off "discoverable" mode in your Bluetooth settings. Also, the worm does not activate until the user clicks on a "velasco.sis" message on the handheld, so you should delete this immediately if you see it.

The anti-virus company believes the problem of viruses is going to get worse, because developers are sharing the source code of their worms via web sites.

This means prospective new virus writers will have easy access to a blueprint to build new viruses and exploit security holes in handheld operating systems. 



Hot Links

www.f-secure.com

Security experts



Hot Links

www.palmone.com/au
Home of the Treo 650

Hands on with the Treo 650

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VersaMail 2.7 for Treo

As palmOne launches its new Treo 650, the company has announced a new e-mail package for both Treo devices.


VersaMail 2.7 provides access to IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) for accessing e-mail via a wireless connection from a central server. This means users can view individual messages on the server rather than having to wait (and pay) to download all new messages each time they log on.

Current Treo 600 owners can use Treo Mail, which offers standard POP access. However, IMAP is the preferred service used by many companies. The system also gives the Treo functionality similar to BlackBerry handhelds, in that mail can be "delivered" on demand — the user can be notified of new mail by the handheld as it arrives, so they don't have to remember to check.

VersaMail can be configured to download only headers, view messages in plain text or

HTML format, and allow the user to delete read messages just from the smartphone or from the entire server.

Hyperlinks are also supported, allowing quick access to Web Pro Browser 3 via tapping any link or web address included in a message.

palmOne says the inclusion of VersaMail 2.7 is about minimising the need to compromise when using a smartphone or handheld device. 

Speak and SMS?


Love to send SMS but hate trying to type fast on a tiny keyboard and rely on predictive text dictionaries? Sent your friends "yes I die" instead of "yes I did" too many times?

Samsung has a solution, introducing the first speech to text voice recognition for a mobile phone.

VoiceMode is included on Samsung's new p207 handset. There are no firm dates as yet for an Australian release of this device.

VoiceMode enables the user to speak into the handset and have their voice translated to SMS or e-mail text. Early experimentation reveals the system needs you to speak slowly and clearly, one word at a time, for proper recognition.

A similar system, which will be included on the Samsung a890, allows users to add a pre-set message and address the message, all via speech. The user speaks the name of the receiver, and then adds "Call me" or "Will

call you later" or various other prefab messages. This system allows speech at a normal, conversational pace. 



Hot Links

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iPod not included. For illustration purposes only.



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By Seamus Byrne.

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QuickTime 7 preview information

2005: The year of HD

The Macworld Expo 2005 keynote address offered a vision of great promise for video enthusiasts. Steve Jobs devoted much of his time to HD video, launching the latest range of video products to back up his claim that "2005 is the year of HD video editing". From iMovie HD to QuickTime 7, Apple is clearly dedicated to making HD a real part of our video experience right now.

The most significant video product announcement had to be the introduction of HD right across the range of Apple video editing products. The new iMovie HD in iLife '05 along with the new Final Cut Express HD bring HD editing to the beginner and intermediate levels of Mac video editor. Joining in with Final Cut Pro HD, all packages now support 1080i and 720p HDV as well as the 16:9 ratio.

Perhaps the real backbone of Apple's focus on HD video will be the release of QuickTime 7 and its use of H.264 encoding. H.264, also known as Advanced Video Coding (AVC), was recently ratified for use in both next generation video disc formats — HD-DVD and Blu-ray Disc. It is a versatile form of MPEG-4 that offers excellent video at lower bitrates than previous codecs. Further to this, its great scalability is perfect for use

across many platforms — from mobile phones to high-resolution applications. Apple's rapid implementation of H.264 in QuickTime will offer Pro users access to next generation video technology as soon as it becomes available. Making the transition to new disc technologies will be simple for the Mac platform. QuickTime 7 was discussed by Jobs as part of the Tiger preview, so expect it to arrive at the same time as Tiger — expected in second quarter this year.

Jobs was not only preaching the virtues of HD in the Mac product space. He happily touted Sony's HD prosumer camcorder, the FX1, as part of his keynote address. Bringing Sony President Kunitake Ando to the stage, Jobs offered him the chance to talk about the FX1 and Sony's own belief that 2005 will be "the year of HD in the home". This united display of commitment to HDV made a clear statement to video users and producers — stop waiting, start using. Now that HD is available beyond the broadcast industry, Apple and Sony are clearly keen to break the cycle of delay — where combined lack of content and hardware cause poor uptake of both. Promoting the production of HD content in the home can only help push the uptake of HD displays.



Beyond HD support, the announced updates to iMovie and Final Cut Express offer significant new features for video editors. Both packages now offer a great deal more than previously and should attract many more editors to Apple's video software.

iMovie 5 offers a "Magic iMovie" option that automatically captures footage, detects scenes and adds transitions. Along with new video effects and sound effects from Skywalker Sound, beginners will be getting better results than ever from this entry level software — upping the ante for what more experienced editors should be producing with more expensive software.

Final Cut Express gains the inclusion of LiveType for dynamic text and graphics and Soundtrack for serious audio work, making it even more attractive to mid- to high-level prosumer editors. A new voiceover tool, support for layered Photoshop files and many improvements to features such as compositing, transitions, filters and colour corrections have also been added. Further, it will import iMovie projects for those looking to make the step up.

This was certainly a keynote with a lot for the video enthusiast. Steve Jobs has shown Mac video users that they've come to the right platform for cutting edge video technology. 📺

SuperDrive DVD±R/RW support update

In January we discussed the limited support for DVD burning in Apple software and hardware. With the introduction of iLife '05, Apple is moving to ensure wider support for writeable DVD media. iDVD 5 now supports all DVD±R/RW media on "any supported Apple SuperDrive". What is a supported drive? Apple states that all currently shipping Macs with a built-in SuperDrive can burn DVDs using

DVD±R/RW. There are also some older models that should offer support, including the 17- and 20-inch iMac, all PowerMac G5s, and recent model iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 — with SuperDrive, of course.

Beyond the updated format support, iDVD includes other new features such as OneStep DVD creation. With one touch iDVD will capture video from your camcorder and produce a DVD of the footage. New

templates also include dynamic dropzones, and advanced slideshow features. 📺



Hot Links

docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=300665:

the list of non-current systems that will support DVD±RW media

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let's go shopping...



GRIFFIN iPod Accessories



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Teachers are continually amazed to find children of all ages and levels of literacy queuing beside computers at lunchtime to have their turn on "Kewala". One parent rang in and ordered **Typequick for Students** and said, "I have finally given in to my daughter's endless requests for a home version of "Kewala". Ever since she started using it at school last week she hasn't stopped asking for it. She loves it."

Mac users can finally share the experience of "Kewala".

Voted PC User Magazine's #1 product two years running **Typequick for Students** is recommended for its solid educational content, active learning techniques and undisputed rate of success. Kids of all ages love it as they enjoy the animated lessons with vibrant colours, bush sounds and unique characters.

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"Typequick For Students or Kewala's Typing Adventure, is in a class of its own when it comes to typing software for young people.

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Rose Vines. ICON, SMH

I want it now

There's an unwritten law in Adelaide called the "20 minute rule". Basically, if anything is further away than 20 minutes (irrespective of mode of travel) then don't go.

Fine for the city of churches, but have you noticed that the same dictum applies to computer use?

I recently observed two teachers transfer over 100 high resolution images from a USB thumb drive and repeatedly force-quit after 30 seconds because "it had taken too long so it there must be something wrong". They did this four or five times before seeking help, asking me what was broken.

"Are there any messages on the screen?" I asked. "Oh, yeah there was something but I didn't read it," comes the reply.

This is the same sort of behaviour that results in 45 copies of an assignment sheet from a recalcitrant printer once restarted ("I thought if I printed it one more time it might be able to do it"). Grrr.

Besides contributing to the glabrous cranial state of many computer support personnel, this illustrates the lack of basic understanding exhibited by many a computer user.

Mac users tend to be a bit better; where their Wintel cousins still tend to quit out of applications rather than shift focus to a different, open, application, Mac users are more used to having multiple applications open at once (without the machine crashing that is). But the fact remains that using computers is not as trivial a task as marketing people would suggest.

It seems like at least 20 times a day I talk to a student (or teacher) who cannot recall what an error dialog was saying. It seems the simplest thing, really — what did the computer tell you was wrong — but for a first time user this is quite a difficult task.

Trying to install a DVD/CD/VHS/FM thingy recently (a Christmas indulgence) reminded me of the frustration of a first-timer. Much of the problem here was with an interface seemingly written for a visiting Klingon, but even the sophistication of the Mac operating system will often fail for newbies.

Learning theory would suggest that a beginner who encounters a screenful of information is totally bewildered and unable to see that there is any useful information in the dialog at all. Much like a learner driver, he or she can focus on one thing at a time only. The synchronisation of accelerator and clutch fills their entire universe — there is no cognitive space left to deal with avoiding the approaching semi-trailer.

Recently, on a computer coordinator's e-mail list, reference was made to the "steaming corpse of IT" in schools — implying that



Hot Links

www.realsoftware.com

The US home for RealBasic

www.streetwise.com.au

Distributor of RealSoftware products in Australia

www.macenterprise.org

Collaborative effort of education institutions and IT professionals involved in managing lots of Macs. You can get a lot of handy apps here (written in RealBasic) to access Apple Remote Desktop databases

computing didn't need to be taught anymore. Given the issues described above, if computing studies (for lack of a better name) goes the way of all flesh, replaced by courses that simply concentrate on how to make a presentation in PowerPoint, then kiss your hair goodbye.

In this realm the Mac appears to have a bit of a disadvantage. Speak to most people, and they will associate programming with Visual Basic and consequently state that you need a Windows machine. As well, most state governments have reached a bulk order deal with Microsoft so schools effectively get Visual Basic for "free".

There are alternatives without having to don the full metal jacket of C++ programming. Beginners All Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code or BASIC has been around for a long time. Developed for

beginners (duh), its users were widely criticised for their lack of "real" programming style. It was a little unfair blaming the users, as the language itself often

let them down (with the exception of some strains, particularly the version deployed on the BBC Acorn Computer, popular in Australian schools in the early '80s).

Some may convince you to use Microworlds (the modern version of Seymour Papert's "turtle" graphics) to teach some programming. Several schools

do this well, but what I am talking about here is the provision of an integrated development environment.

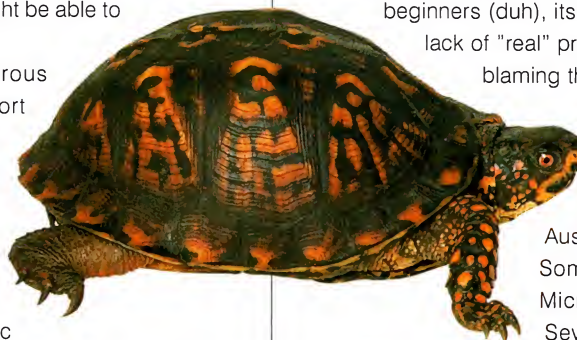
RealBasic, from Real Software, uses an interface driven, object-orientated approach which separates coding from interface design and allows development of code (including VBA compliant code) that will compile to run on almost anything.

As such it is ideally suited to make programmers more sensitive to how the user will interact with the application, or for a group to work on coding and interface elements separately — the learning opportunities here are great.

Plus, it's not just for teaching. RealBasic is very handy to develop tools quickly for querying databases, such as the built-in database used by Apple Remote Desktop. This process promises to revolutionise the deployment of lots of new machines.

Perhaps buying RealBasic and forgoing the VBA Windows route is the first step to getting lots of nice new Macs. ☺

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.



By James Christopher Murty

Process in batches

Automating Pipelines

Graphical user interfaces pervade almost all aspects of our lives now from desktops computers to laptops, iPods to mobile phones, and onboard car systems to in-flight entertainment. There is no escaping them — not that this is entirely a bad thing, as the good ones can make complex tasks far simpler. However, sometimes the GUI distracts us and makes us forget the reason that we started having all these computers around in the first place.

They are, after all, computing devices; machines that excel at repeating complex tasks over and over at incredible speeds. Everyday Mac users may not be aware of the complicated steps power-users (particularly media professionals creating music or images) have to go through to batch process data.

I'm referring to processes that you're probably already familiar with. As an example, when you select a few digital pictures in iPhoto and click on the Mail button, iPhoto runs each image through a series of processes, often called a pipeline. First it scales each image and then tells Mail to create a new message with each scaled image embedded in it.

Pro users do things like this regularly but on a much larger scale. Instead of scaling a couple of photos for an e-mail, they might be dealing with several thousand images from a scanner or a digital camera to be used in print or on the web. There may be a great deal of other processes that need to be applied to these pipelines other than simply scaling each image. For example, perhaps the number of colours needs to be changed, and the file format converted from one to another. In the case of a series of scanned images, perhaps a rotation needs to be applied. Final images may need to be cropped, or to have a drop shadow and some other effect applied.

Pro solutions regularly evolve out of combining the built-in batch capabilities of applications such as Adobe Photoshop and linking them via scripting languages such as AppleScript. These scripts work by effectively taking remote control of various GUI applications.

Unix users have been building pipelines and batch processing their work for some time now. There has, in fact, been a tool available to all shell users called a "pipe" (represented by the "|" character) for over 30 years now. Along with file redirection and various simple shell looping structures, a user can send their data through a series of transformations via pipes — reading it from directories full of files, manipulating it into the form that they want, then dumping it back out to a file. Since Unix treats almost everything as a file of some kind, Unix pipelines can contain just



Hot Links

fink.sourceforge.net

Fink — open source ports collection

netpbm.sourceforge.net/doc/

NetPBM Documentation

netpbm.sourceforge.net/doc//directory.html

NetPBM Program Directory

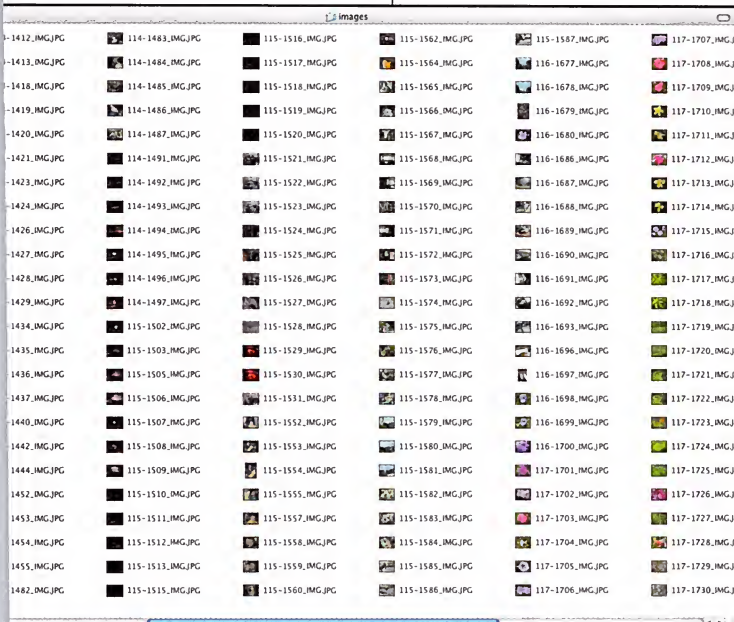
about anything including text, images or audio. Open Source toolkits are available providing many hundreds of utilities that can be linked together to do these transformations for you.

NetPBM. Jef Poskanzer and Bryan Henderson's NetPBM is a collection of command line utilities (it contains 220 separate programs) — which act as primitives or building blocks — for converting and transforming images. NetPBM has three internal image formats PBM, PGM, PPM (collectively referred to as PPM) representing black and white, greyscale, and colour bitmap images respectively, and a fourth format called PAM — a more recent addition that encompasses many different type of image data including the older three above. While a lot of this may seem redundant, you have to understand that NetPBM was first released back in 1988. It originally only knew about black and white images. As displays become more advanced it grew to support greyscale and finally colour images. More recently it has needed to evolve once more to support images with alpha channels for transparency. History implies a legacy — these sorts of things find their way into code that sticks around forever. There is much more information about NetPBM at its documentation page as well as a directory and explanation of each of the 220 separate utilities (see "Hot links").

Building a pipeline. First of all you need to install NetPBM, which is easily done if you have Fink and the Developer Tools already installed. Typing `fink install netpbm-bin` will install a mostly up-to-date version; certainly a version recent enough for what we want to do here.

To build a pipeline with NetPBM, you first convert your image from whatever format it's in (it supports over 20 different images formats including JPEG, GIF, TIFF, PNG, etc.) to one of the internal formats — generally PNM. For example, to convert a JPEG, you'd use `jpegtopnm`. Next the output from the conversion tool is piped into the first transformation tool you want to use. For example, if you wanted to flip the image on the vertical you'd use `pamflip`. If you wanted to perform further transformations, the output from this utility would be piped into the next utility and so on until you're done. Finally you write the image out to a file using the appropriate conversion utility. For example if you wanted to end up with a PNG, you'd use `pnmtopng`.

iPhoto Mail. So, for a real demonstration using our previous iPhoto example, let's replicate the kind of graphics pipeline it creates when you send an image to someone. This is a pretty



Overload! Converting large numbers of files is laborious, but can be done quickly and easily using the command line.

simple process: read in the image; shrink the image to a chosen size; write out the transformed image to a new file.

To do this with NetPBM, you need to use the `jpegtopnm` command to read and convert the jpeg. The output is then piped into `pamscale` for resizing. Finally the output from `pamscale` is piped into `pnmtojpeg` so that it can be written out to a new file. Assuming that you have a JPEG file called `photo.jpg` and you wanted to shrink it down so that it fit into a box bounded by 320 by 320 pixels respecting the original aspect ratio of the image, type the following:

```
jpegtopnm photo.jpg | \
pamscale -xyfit 320 320 | \
pnmtojpeg > photo_small.jpg
```

The above commands can be typed out on a single line by omitting the “\” characters. They are valid characters allowing the line to be broken up into easier to read chunks.

Batch processing. Next, a more advanced example that could be useful in the case where you’ve scanned a lot of images into TIFF files and want to shrink them by 50 percent, rotate them 90 degrees clockwise, and finally save them out as GIF files. The pipeline in this case is going to use `tifftopnm`, followed by `pamscale`, followed by `pamflip`. GIF images can only have a maximum of 256 colours so if the scans were in full colour we’ll need to process them with `pamquant` to reduce the number of colours before we can write them out with `ppmtogif`. For a single file the pipeline would look something like this:

```
tifftopnm filename.tif | \
pamscale .5 | \
pamflip -cw | \
pnmquant 256 | \
ppmtogif > filename.gif
```

Since in this example we’re assuming that we have a directory with hundreds of TIFF files in it, we want to have the shell use a for loop statement to avoid the tedium of doing it all by hand.

Assuming that all our TIFF files have a .tif suffix use the following:

```
for file in *.tif;
do
    tifftopnm "$file" | \
    pamscale .5 | \
    pamflip -cw | \
    pnmquant 256 | \
    ppmtogif > "`basename "$file"
.tif`.gif;
done
```

Notice the use of the `basename` command, which extracts the .tif suffix off of the file name so that .gif can be appended. There are two kinds of quotes used here which are equally important. Double quotes (“”) are used to protect the contents of our variable file that may contain spaces. The opening single quote characters (‘ which appears above the tab key) cause the `basename` command to be evaluated first so that its output – the filename minus .tif – can be added to the new suffix.

If you were interested in using a loop like the one in the above example to process JPG images from a digital camera it’s probably worth pointing out that although the file system regards a file called `filename.jpg` same as `FILENAME.JPG`, to a shell script they are different. Since most digital cameras write images out with upper case names you’ll want to use: `for file in *.JPG` otherwise the script won’t find anything to process.

Building a shell script. If you think that you’re likely to use ideas like those in the examples above more than once, then it’s probably a good idea to put them into a shell script file, make them executable, and copy them to a directory in your path so that they can be called from anywhere.

The final batch example could easily be made into a working shell script simply by creating a new text file called `mypipeline.sh` and typing in the above command with the addition of `#!/bin/sh` at the top of the file.

To make the script executable type `chmod +x mypipeline.sh`. If you haven’t already got one, make a directory to place your custom scripts into using `sudo mkdir /usr/local/bin` and add this to your path by adding a line that looks like `PATH=${PATH}:/usr/local/bin` to your `.bash_profile` file. This way all you have to do to batch process a directory full of images is to `cd` to that directory and type `mypipeline.sh`.

Apple is promising to unleash Tiger by June, and I’m certainly looking forward to having a play with Automater as I’m sure most of the time it will be the easiest way to do this kind of processing. However the shell script approach can come in handy in many situations, and what it may lack in user friendliness, it makes up in terms of speed and efficiency. 🐼

By Bruce Fraser

Be a digital darkroom expert

Inside camera RAW

If you have a mid-range or pro digital camera, you can probably produce images in the RAW format. A RAW file is a record of the data a camera's sensor captures. Shooting RAW beats shooting in JPEG format for several reasons, but to benefit from RAW's strengths, you have to edit images using the Adobe Photoshop CS Camera Raw plug-in (free with Photoshop CS). Many of the tricks in this tutorial will also work in iPhoto 5, which adds the ability to handle RAW files to Apple's inexpensive photo browser.

Balancing act. Shooting JPEG is like shooting transparency film: you have to get everything perfect in the camera because

(If you get a beep when you click, you're clicking on a pixel that's too bright.)

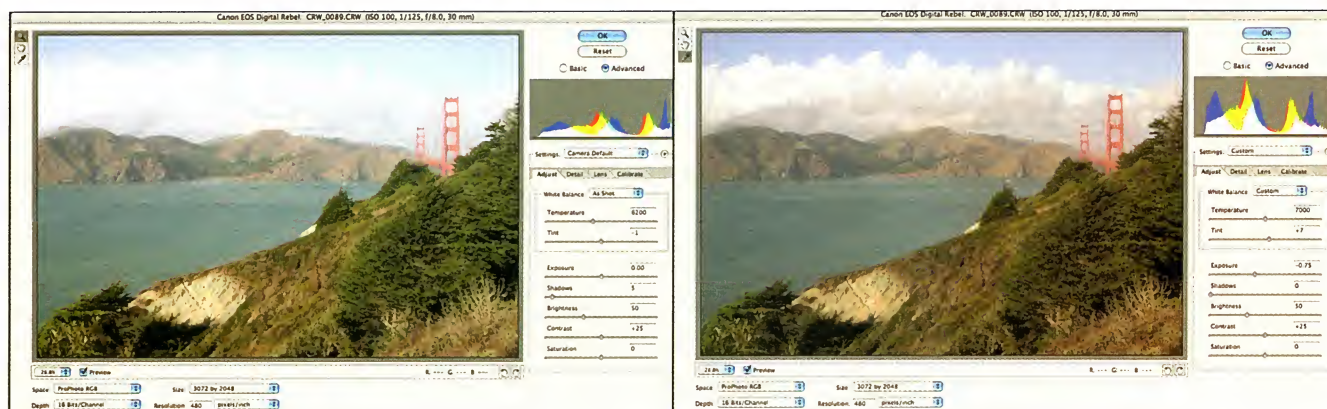
For interesting warming and cooling effects, use the eyedropper and click on darker, near-neutral pixels. For more-precise creative adjustments, use the Temperature and Tint sliders.

The Temperature slider indicates, in kelvins, the colour of the light for which Camera Raw is trying to compensate. Moving the slider toward higher colour temperatures (bluer light) results in a warmer, yellower image, while moving toward lower colour temperatures (yellowish light) results in a colder, bluer image. You can think of the Temperature slider as a blue-to-yellow control.

The Tint slider controls the axis that runs perpendicular to colour temperature, so it's essentially a green-magenta control – negative values add green, positive ones add magenta.

As with all the slider controls in Camera Raw, you can adjust Temperature and Tint by moving the sliders with the cursor, but for more precision, use the up- and down-arrow keys. To move the slider a single increment, press the arrow key once; add the shift key to move the slider in increments of ten. Press tab and shift-tab to toggle through the number fields.

Recovering data. The next two controls in the Adjust tab are Exposure and Shadows. Camera Raw's Exposure slider is a white-point tool with negative and positive ranges. At positive



Recover highlights. In Camera Raw, you can resurrect fine detail that you'd otherwise lose. In the image on the left, the clouds are blown out. To produce the image on the right, I reduced the Exposure value by -0.75 stop, which restored detail to the clouds.

you can't do much to reshape contrast and colour balance once you've captured the image. RAW is superior to JPEG because shooting RAW is more like shooting negative film: although you have to process the image before you can see it, you have latitude in how you shape the overall tone and colour balance. For example, the Camera Raw plug-in excels at correcting an image's white balance.

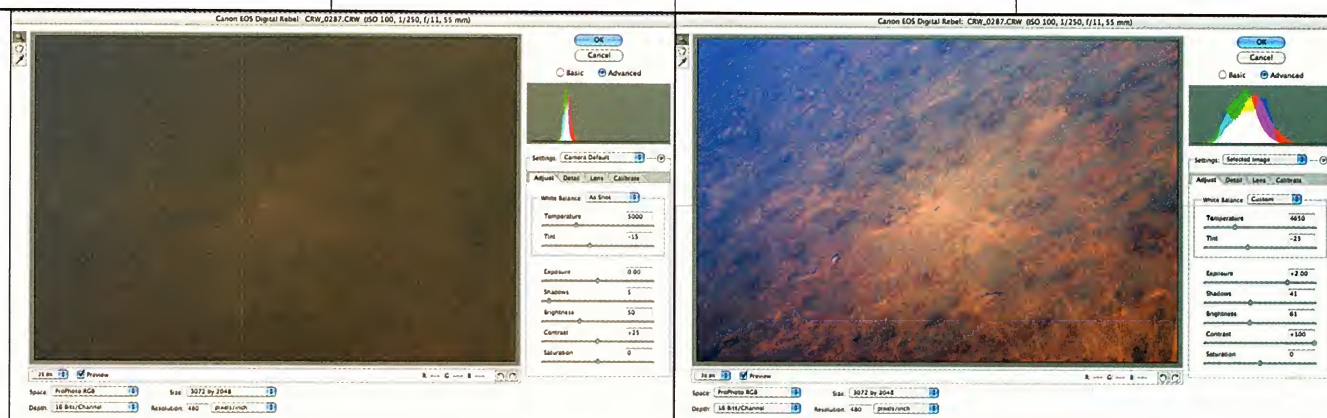
In Camera Raw, the Temperature and Tint sliders (in the Adjust tab) and the eyedropper tool (in the Tool palette) are white-balance tools that let you neutralise any colour cast in the lighting, but they're also interesting as creative tools.

You can set an accurate white balance quickly using the eyedropper tool – just click on a near-white or light-grey pixel.

values, it works like the white input slider in Photoshop's Levels feature. Its increments are fractions of an f-stop, so adjusting the Exposure slider is like increasing the exposure on the camera using the shutter and aperture controls.

At negative values, the Exposure setting triggers Camera Raw's extended highlight recovery logic. While most RAW converters give up as soon as you clip channels, Camera Raw attempts to reconstruct highlight detail even if it's present in only a single channel. Now's the time to bring back that detail – if you don't recover it in Camera Raw, there won't be any detail left to recover when the converted image lands in Photoshop.

Like Photoshop's Levels sliders, Camera Raw's Exposure and Shadows controls offer a clipping display when you hold down



Desert details. Here's the outback from above. The image at camera default settings (left) is flat and muddy, and the histogram data is clumped in a very narrow tonal range. To produce the image on the right, I made extreme Exposure and Shadows corrections that spread the data across a wider tonal range; then I increased Brightness slightly and Contrast a lot to make the most of the available detail. Finally, I gave it a white-balance tweak.

the option key while moving the slider. (Shadows works like the black input slider in Levels.) You see exactly what the software is clipping. Depending on the camera and the white balance, you may be able to recover as much as a stop of highlight data (see the screenshot "Recover highlights" for examples).

Controlling tone. Exposure, Shadows, and the remaining tonal controls, Brightness and Contrast, work together to define a five-point tone curve. Exposure sets the white point, Shadows sets the black point, Brightness is a mid-tone adjustment like

the grey slider in Photoshop's Levels, and Contrast adds two points around the midpoint set by Brightness. The histogram updates in real time as you move the controls.

To make the best use of a raw image's available bits, use these controls to shape the image's overall tone and contrast. If you instead bring the image into Photoshop for correction, you'll lose a great deal of tonal information in the conversion from linear gamma to a gamma-corrected Photoshop working space, making your job more difficult or even impossible (see the screenshot "Desert details" for a demonstration).

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By Sean McNamara.

Domain event

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month Channelworx (1300 883 882) gives a copy of Dantz Retrospect Desktop (valued at \$259) to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the most intriguing Help folder query.

Retrospect Desktop is the #1 home and small office backup software for Macintosh. Don't rely on manual drag-and-drop to protect your data — it misses important files, is performed sporadically at best, and cannot restore older or deleted files. Retrospect allows you to easily set up complete, scheduled backups of three networked Macintosh, Windows, or Red Hat Linux desktop and notebook computers. Client licenses are available to protect additional computers. The product CD contains both Retrospect 6.0 for backing up to Mac OS X (10.1.5 through 10.3 "Panther") and Retrospect 5.1 for backing up to Mac OS 9.

Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration for Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win Retrospect Desktop.

All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



1

At work I recently registered a new domain name for our business. We then added several e-mail addresses. However, given that some of the addresses are being directed into the one mailbox by our provider, I am unable to separate my mail when it arrives. Apple's Mail allows us to have several addresses on the one account, but it does not allow you to use that one account name for multiple addresses.

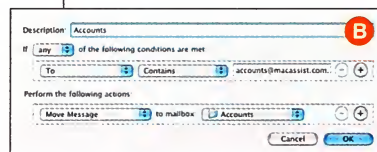
I would like to split up my addresses because the "descriptions" and "full name" need to be different to allow for work and personal.

I have had a look at Entourage as well but this seems to be stricken with the same problem. However I don't really want to use Entourage as it is not compatible with iCal or Address Book.

Brent Schoof
Albany, WA

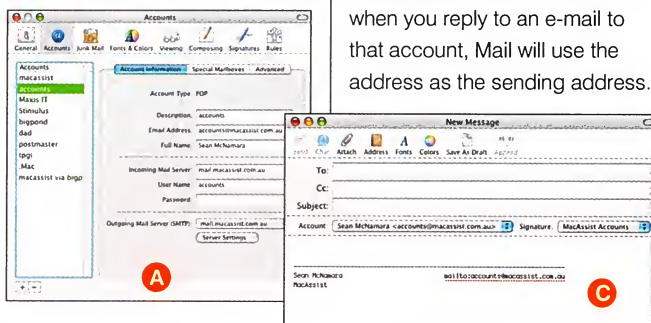
an option, you can still get some of the functionality you're seeking, but it's not how Mail was intended to be used.

The trick is to set up an account in Mail as if it had its own mailbox, but leave the password field blank **A**. When prompted for the password for that account, just press the Cancel button — Mail should only ask once per time it's



opened. I leave Mail running all the time, so I rarely get asked — if you shut your machine down each day or quit Mail in between uses, you'll get asked more often.

You can also use Rules to separate out the mail into different mailboxes as it arrives **B**. The account is also available for sending e-mails from **C**, and when you reply to an e-mail to that account, Mail will use the address as the sending address.



The simplest solution, Brent, is to have one mailbox for each address — you can then set up each address in Mail and send and receive mail for each account. If that's not



Hot Links

www.blackdiamond.co.za/bdhefty.html
HeftyFTP
www.qdea.com/pages/downloads1.html
Synchronise! Pro X
www.labf.org/~egon/mac_backup
How to use rsync

www.channelworx.com.au
Query of the month sponsor
www.microsoft.com/mac
Tip of the month sponsor

Slow starter

2

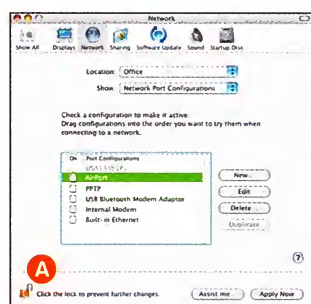
■ My daughter's eMac takes a very long time to start up — sometimes five minutes or more. When we bought it, it started up properly, but has been getting slower over the last few months.

She has a lot of music in iTunes, and quite number of photos on board, but otherwise has no extraneous software that loads on startup.

Tim Roberts
via internet

It's a little unclear from your question, Tim, where in the startup procedure the slowdown is occurring — before the Apple logo appears, before the screen switches to the blue background, during the welcome screen messages, or in between that and the Finder loading.

Everything up to around the point at which the welcome screen clears before the Finder loads (or when the login screen appears if you have auto-login disabled) is System-level — not



user-level. Processes after that point may be user- or System-level. Also, the recently released 10.3.7 update has seen startup times increase for many users — have you updated your daughter's Mac to 10.3.7?

We can implicate or eliminate user-level problems by creating a new user and auto-logging in as that user (if you have auto-login turned on for your daughter) or logging in from the login screen as the new user if your daughter logs in on each startup.

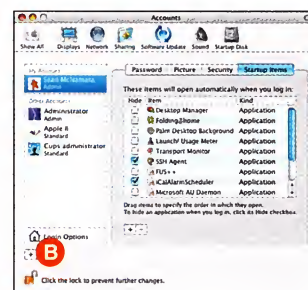
If the problem remains when logged in as the new user, the

problem is most likely System-related. It may be a Network problem (such as DHCP problems) — you could disable all network ports by deselecting them all in the Network System Preferences pane **A** before trying the re-install, but my suspicion is the problem lies elsewhere. Turn the needed network ports back on if the problem persists.

It may also be a Startup Disk selection problem — open the Startup Disk System Preferences pane and make sure the Mac OS X folder on your HD is selected. Restart and check and see if the problem recurs. If it does, I would then suggest a PRAM reset — hold down ⌘-option-P-R while restarting the Mac until you hear the startup chime twice.

If the problem persists, it's time to do a System re-install from original install disks, specifying "Archive & Install" and "Preserve Users & Network Settings" by clicking on the Options button after clicking on the Mac's HD icon during the install process.

If the problem disappears when logged in as the new user, there's something in your



daughter's Home folder which is causing the problem.

One user-level cause of slow startup I've seen is a large number of fonts in the user's Fonts folder (in the Library folder in the user's Home folder).

Check the user-level preferences such as Login/Startup Items (Mac OS X v10.2 has its own System Preferences pane for these, in Mac OS X v10.3, it's a subsection of the Accounts System Preferences pane) **B** or Desktop (in case it's set to a rotating set of photos). Also, check to see if Classic is set start automatically on login — I've seen Classic Startup cause apparent freezes during startup.

The big freeze

3

I use an iMac G4 and backup to an 80GB Ice Cube daily — or at least I try to.

I copy the same three or four folders every day and for some unknown reason, copying these particular folders will often cause the process to hang.

Sometimes it stops on the same file, but there's nothing wrong with the file itself. Once

the Ice Cube has malfunctioned once, I can forget trying to copy anything after that.

I've tried:

■ Repair Permissions in Disk Utility (which doesn't always fix permissions, so I had to go through over 300 files/folders and individually force them to take the Ownership/Permission settings required). Still didn't fix the problem entirely, but did help slightly;

■ running DiskWarrior on my G4 and on Ice Cube to no avail;

■ erasing entire Ice Cube disk countless times and although this fixes the problem temporarily, it always re-occurs; and

■ zeroing the entire disk with no improvement.

Short of tossing the Ice Cube out of the window, is there anything else I could try?

Martins Silins
Bankstown, NSW

There have been a few times that large copying tasks have caused the Finder to tip over, so you may be seeing one of these bugs. This situation has improved as Apple has revised and updated their OS, so make sure you have applied the latest updaters for your version of Mac OS X.

There is a slim chance the problem is user-level — try the recommendation for Tim Roberts in this month's Help Folder to eliminate or implicate user-level issues as the cause of the problem.

Probably the best thing to do it to rely on a third party tool to do the backing up for you. Synchronise! Pro X (see "Hot links") can do backups of you HD or parts of it.

You can also use rsync, a Unix backup tool — see "Hot links" for a good tutorial. This has the added advantage of being free.

Upgrade path

4

I've just purchased a G5 iMac running Mac OS X with 256MB RAM and I have two issues.

First, I have upgraded from a Performa 5400 running Mac OS 7.5. I want to connect the two Macs together for the purpose of copying files from the 5400 to the iMac. Problem is, the 5400 only has a floppy disk drive (which is stuffed), no writable CD drive and a SCSI socket. Is there any such thing as a SCSI to USB connector?

While both Macs are connectable to the internet I only have a dialup connection (at 56Kbps) so only one connection can occur at a time and it would be too slow

uploading via e-mail or .Mac. What options do I have?

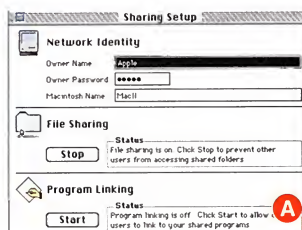
Second, my internet connection is rather slow at 56Kbps and, as I live in rural NSW, broadband is not available as yet and power blackouts are frequent. As such, downloading large files from the internet can be quite frustrating due to the frequent stoppages. Is there functionality within Mac OS X to pick-up downloads from where they stopped and continue the download?

Rob Brew

Orange, NSW

Wow, Rob, that's quite an upgrade!

Probably the cheapest and easiest way to transfer the files from the Performa to the iMac would be to buy a secondhand PCI or CommSlot Ethernet card (Try MicroSeconds in Sydney; 02 92816392), then connect the two computers using an Ethernet crossover cable. Make sure the iMac is booted before



you start up the Performa.

Older Macs can have trouble seeing other devices on a crossover cable if the older Mac is started first.

You'll then be able to turn on File Sharing on the Performa in the Sharing Setup control panel **A** and log into it from the iMac. You can't log into the iMac from the Performa because the AppleShare protocol is too new.

Once the card is installed (and drivers installed, if needed) and the computers are turned on, go to the Network Control Panel and click on EtherTalk. You may not have a Network Control Panel, in which case you should have an AppleTalk Control Panel — select the appropriate Ethernet option in the popup menu. On the iMac,

make sure AppleTalk is enabled for the Built-in Ethernet port.

Then go to the Network browser and double click on the Performa's icon — log in using the username and password specified in the Performa's File Sharing Setup control panel. You'll then see an icon on the Desktop of the Performa's HD, and you'll be able to copy almost everything from it — some items in the System Folder won't copy, but you can Duplicate that folder on the Performa, and then copy that duplicate over to the iMac.

As for resuming downloads, check out HeftyFTP (see "Hot links"). It will automatically retry failed downloads, will try to resume interrupted downloads and also handles HTTP transfers, not just FTP ones. That should make your download experiences more pleasant while you wait for broadband.

AirPort on fire

Microsoft Reader tip

■ My wife has a G4 iBook with AirPort; I have a G4 PowerBook similarly enabled. Every evening I dial up my ISP, and set my laptop to Share the Internet Connection to the AirPort.

My wife was able to send and receive e-mail through the shared connection only if we had our firewalls turned off (ughh).

The problem was in the Firewall (Allow) options. While there is a web option (Personal Web Sharing), there

is no explicit "Allow e-mail traffic" option. You must enter a new Firewall (Allow) setting manually.

To do this, open System Preferences and select Sharing. Then click on the Firewall tab. Click on New... to get the modal dialog sheet.

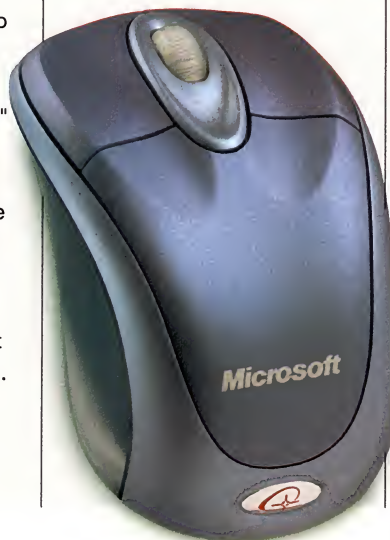
In the Port Name popup, click on "Other". Enter "E-mail" as a description, and Ports 110,25 as Range or Series.

Click OK, then return to the Firewall Preference, and tick the E-mail entry that has appeared in the "Allow" listbox. It will probably be out of sight (scroll down to get it).

Tony Barry

Werrington, NSW

Each month Microsoft gives a free Wireless Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best



tip. Designed specifically for notebook computers, the Wireless Notebook Optical Mouse delivers users both portable comfort and performance. With intelligent features and design, this mouse combines the perfect mix of comfort and mobility, making it the ideal travelling companion no matter what the itinerary.

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PDF Hacks — 100 Industrial Strength Tips And Tools shows you how to do far more things with PDF files than merely printing or reading them. Author Sid Steward uses the term "hack" in a positive way, as something clever or creative. The 100 hacks in the book are organised into seven chapters, but each stands on its own, so theoretically you can dive in anywhere you like. If there's a prerequisite you need to know about, a cross reference will guide you back to the appropriate basic hack.

The first chapter focuses on the various tools for reading PDF files. Learn how to improve your PDF reading experience and how to transfer information from the PDF file into other applications. Managing collections of PDF files and creating great-looking documents before conversion to PDF come next, before a chapter on the various ways of actually creating PDF files. Chapter five shows you how to manipulate PDF files — breaking them into smaller pieces, making their file size smaller and presenting them to users in different ways. Chapter six shows you the dynamic capabilities of PDF through interactive forms and PDF generation from data on the fly. The final chapter deals with scripting and programming Acrobat.

Quite technical in parts and definitely not for the code-shy this book offers extra skills to those who work with PDFs every day.

Photoshop Projects in Easy Steps makes what is at times quite technical information easy to follow by using step-by-step walkthroughs and an abundance of full-colour screen grabs. If you're short on either time or money for formal Photoshop instruction then this book promises to be your mentor. The book assumes a basic familiarity with Photoshop and is a progressively graded series of exercises from "raw beginner to a good, intermediate standard".

Each chapter covers a number of techniques, which are then put together to produce a final effect. These techniques are broken down


into short, numbered sequences which means that you have little chance of losing your way.

After a basic Photoshop refresher course you'll learn how to make caricatures from a photo and how to scan oversize images. There's fun things to do with painting and drawing and some mind-bending uses of perspective. Really useful stuff on photo retouching is followed by wickedly deceitful image manipulation tricks using the cloning tool. Replacing backgrounds and creating textures come next before you will combine a varied set of techniques to produce a brochure. Still to come are shapes and gradients, automation with Actions and illustrative routines. A set of clever little tricks precede the final chapter which gives you the colour-management skills to print the professional work you will by now be producing.

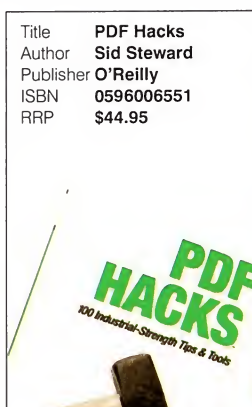
If you want to improve your Photoshop skills plus fun and minus suffering, then this step by step, visual approach might be the one for you.

Adobe Creative Suite Keyboard Shortcuts by shortcut specialist Guy Hart-Davis is tightly focused on saving valuable minutes for graphics and design professionals. The theory behind all this is that the less time you spend mousing around, the more quickly you'll get your work done. So this book puts all the Adobe Creative Suite keyboard shortcuts under the one cover. It even shows you how to create your own.

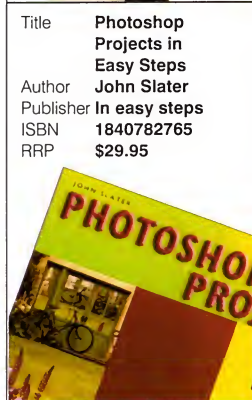
Hart-Davis begins with a quick primer on accessing all the keyboard features that come with your Mac system — from basic settings to universal access, mouse keys and alternative keyboard layouts. Then it's straight into Photoshop, with shortcuts arranged by topic and amply illustrated by graphics and screenshots. Following the same procedure the available short cuts in Illustrator, Acrobat, InDesign, and GoLive are covered in quick succession.

Slim enough to fit in your laptop bag, Adobe Creative Suite Keyboard Shortcuts could be a boon to professionals trying to squeeze an extra few minutes out of each designing day. 

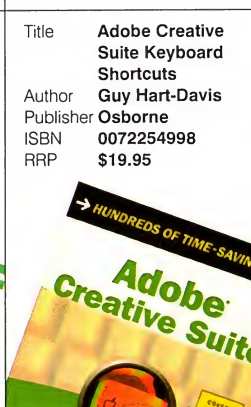
Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.



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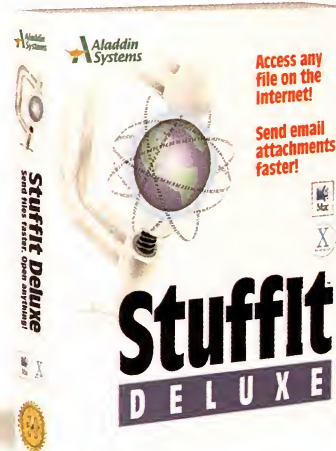
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AMW lab: Colour laser printers

Price barriers disappearing

Finding six colour laser printers to review with one of the criteria being a retail price less than \$1200 would have been an impossible task 12 months ago. The crashing price of everything tech-related now sees colour lasers selling for the price we paid not long ago for a high-end inkjet printer.

Don't despair if you've just parted with a wad of hard-earned cash for a top-notch inkjet printer, because these entry-level lasers aren't designed to compete with photo printers. What they do well is produce very good colour on plain paper, which has never been a strong point for inkjets, and they do it much faster and actually cost less to feed with toner if you are a reasonably heavy user. You can buy glossy paper for your colour laser, which improves the output for that special presentation, but don't be tempted to feed them on glossy inkjet paper. They will die.

We were only able to test four printers out of the six we'd requested because the Hewlett Packard Colour Laserjet 2550L is "end-of-life" according to HP, and the replacement model is not available yet. HP declined to send the older model. The Konica Minolta Magicolor 2430DL is a brand new model only released to the Australian market this month and we were able to get a peek at a pre-production unit. However, it wasn't ready for a full comparison test against its peers. That left us with the Brother 2700CN, Lexmark C510, Epson AcuLaser C1100 and Samsung CLP500.

The Brother and the Lexmark are almost identical units with the only visible difference being the control panels and the different logos. As can be seen from the photos they are otherwise the same and indeed, performed almost identically under test.

Speeding tickets. You can't take the word of the manufacturers when it comes to the print speed of these machines, unless you read the fine-print. Although two of the printers are rated at eight colour pages per minute, that speed rating refers to eight copies of the same colour page printed in succession, not the speed it takes to print eight different pages.

The same applies to their rated speed on black-and-white pages, although it takes much less time to send the data when there's no colour involved, so the actual speed approaches the rated speed.

Colour lasers work their magic by passing each page through the innards four times; once each for cyan, magenta, yellow and black toner application. When they're doing monochrome there's no need for the multiple passes and the output speed ratchets up dramatically.

When it comes to throughput there's also the matter of which print language is being used to turn a page into its finished form, as well as the speed of the printer's internal processor. Two of the units, the Lexmark and the Brother, operate on the familiar PostScript language, which is native to Mac OS X.

Sending them a print job takes only a few seconds regardless of what kind of Macintosh you are using, and the printers rapidly crunch the commands and print the pages, using their internal 500MHz (Lexmark) or 300MHz (Brother) processors. The different

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Outstanding | ★★★★★ |
| Very good | ★★★★ |
| Good | ★★★ |
| Flawed | ★★ |
| Unacceptable | ★ |
| Dangerous | ● |

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2700CN



C510

| | AcuLaser C1100 | CLP500 | C510 |
|----------------|--|--|--|
| ■ Type | Colour laser printer | | |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★½ | ★★★★ | ★★★★½ |
| ■ Pros | Superior print quality | Built-in duplexer, quiet operation | Fast throughput, PostScript standard, Ethernet standard |
| ■ Cons | Not enough RAM standard | Slowest of the pack | No real vices |
| ■ Ports | USB 2.0 | USB 2.0 | USB 2.0, Ethernet 10/100 |
| ■ RRP | \$799 after \$100 cash back offer | \$799 | \$1199 |
| ■ Manufacturer | Epson | Samsung | Lexmark |
| ■ Distributor | Epson Australia 02 8899 3666 | Samsung Electronics Australia 1300 369 600 | Lexmark Australia 1300 362 192 |
| ■ Reviewer | Ian Yates | | |
| ■ Hot links | www.epson.com.au | www.samsung.com.au | www.lexmark.com.au |

processor speeds appeared to be the sole difference between the two printers. Despite the extra horsepower, the Lexmark didn't print noticeably faster on our test files.

However the Samsung and the Epson use proprietary print languages, requiring more work by the CPU in your Macintosh than is required for PostScript. On a Titanium G4 400Mhz PowerBook it took fifteen minutes to print our test brochure, a 28-page PDF with photos on every page scattered amongst the marketing text.

Sneak peek

The Konica Minolta Magicolour 2430DL should be in stores later this month and the pre-production unit that we took a look at was tantalising. The 2430DL is a very compact unit, smaller than the others we tested. It's another proprietary language printer so you need to load drivers before you can print. Like the Epson, the 2430DL uses a rotating toner system and once again this does seem to help register each colour more accurately.

A nice touch with this unit is that the toner stack comes pre-loaded into the printer from the factory, rather than requiring you to tear open four toner packs and load them individually into the printer, and everything you need to access can be done from the front. This feature would make it easier to find a home for the printer in a crowded home office. The 2430DL also has memory card slots for direct printing of photos from a digital camera, something you expect with an inkjet but not so common with a laser, and ships with Ethernet and USB 2.0 ports.



Using a G4 desktop running at 800Mhz the job took ten minutes. If you have a faster Mac then you should be able to get an even faster output up to the limit of the print engine – which, in the case of the Epson, is limited by its 66MHz internal CPU. Epson claims a first-page output speed of 17 seconds for colour, but we were only able to achieve that speed when printing a web page.

However, the Epson could still keep up with the Samsung, which boasts a 166MHz processor. Interestingly, both the Epson and the Samsung print faster when driven by an old Windows XP laptop running at a lowly 366MHz. That suggests that the printer drivers for Mac OS X are either not very well optimised or converting from PostScript takes lots of grunt – or both. The Lexmark and the Brother took only five minutes to spew out the 28-page brochure regardless of which Macintosh was sending the file, close to their rated output of eight pages a minute.

Of course, the actual time taken to get a finished page is still much quicker with any of these printers when compared to a mid-range inkjet. The psychology of waiting is worse with these colour lasers, since nothing happens until the last ten seconds of the process when the gears and cogs whir and a printed page pops into the tray. Even though inkjets take much longer, you can see and hear them spitting their way across the page from



CLP500



AcuLaser C1100

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True plug and play for Mac or PC

The ultimate desk accessory of 2004.

G2
ICECUBE
GENERATION 2

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| 2700CN | Colour Laserjet 2550L | Magicolor 2430 |
| ⚡⚡⚡ 1/2 | Not tested | Not rated |
| Fast throughput, PostScript standard, Ethernet standard | | Memory card slots, pre-loaded toners, small and compact |
| No real vices | | proprietary printer language |
| USB 2.0, Ethernet 10/100 | USB 1.1 | USB 2.0, Ethernet 10/100 |
| \$1270 | \$999 end-of-life run-out special | \$899 |
| Brother | Hewlett-Packard | Konica Minolta |
| Brother Australia 02 9887 4344 | HP Australia | Konica Minolta Australia 1800 789 389 |
| www.brother.com.au | www.hp.com.au | www.konicaminolta.com.au |

the moment you send them their data, which takes your mind off the time it actually takes to finish the job.

Interfaces. All the printers come with USB 2.0 ports and the Brother and Lexmark also came equipped with 10/100 Ethernet, making them network friendly. Those that didn't ship with Ethernet can have the interface added via a plug-in option. Since the Brother and Lexmark use Postscript, we didn't need to load any driver software to get them started, but loading the supplied CD gives full access to the extra features, such as monitoring the toner levels. Due to their proprietary printer languages both the Samsung and the Epson needed drivers loaded before any communication was possible.

Features. The prize for most features for the money goes to the Samsung, which comes with duplexer and dual paper trays out of the box. The other printers all have optional duplexers and second paper trays, but the Samsung can have yet another optional 500-sheet tray added underneath.

These printers can also take extra memory and the Epson is in dire need of a boost above the basic 32MB supplied with the printer. Although the Epson printed our colour brochure without a problem, it ran out of memory when presented with an A4-sized photograph that contained lots of saturated colours. The Lexmark and Brother ship with 64MB of memory, as did the Samsung, and none of them ran out of space on any of our tests. However, the Samsung is the slowest of the bunch to produce a page, rated at 24 seconds for the first colour page, but often taking several minutes with complex pages loaded with photos. Samsung claims to have the quietest printer and it was certainly quieter than the others on test.

All the printers claim a maximum print resolution of 2400dpi, except for the Samsung, which offers 1200dpi. They mostly

operate on a native print resolution of 600dpi and use varying tricks to interpolate a better image. However, Epson claims that its method of toner application, which keeps the paper still while the rotating toners apply their inks, results in better colour registration – which appears to the eye as a sharper print. Epson's claims appear to be right on the money when compared to the other printers, which whiz the paper past the toner array four times in succession. Epson pages consistently looked sharper and cleaner with smoother gradations of colour, although slightly less saturated. Skin tones were noticeably more accurate.

One annoying feature shared by the Epson and the Samsung was the attachment of large advertising stickers to the body of the printer extolling their features. Once you've bought the printer and taken it home, do you really need more advertising?

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're in the market for throughput, the extra dollars for the Lexmark or Brother are worth the investment. They are both nearly twice as fast as the other printers in real world tests and their print quality is very good indeed. If you require accurate rendering of PostScript fonts you'll also lean towards this pair.

If you want more features and don't mind waiting a bit longer for your prints, the Samsung is hard to ignore. Plus it has that built-in duplexer for double sided printing.

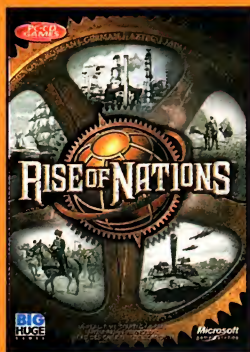
If you want the best looking prints, then the Epson takes the prize, but you will have to wait a bit longer for your printout. However, if you decide on the Epson, order some extra RAM. It needs it.

The simple fact that you can get a colour laser for such a small investment is nothing short of amazing, and the fact that they all work, mostly, as advertised is even more amazing. Come back next year for our round-up of colour lasers for less than \$500. ☞



www.siliconmemory.com.au

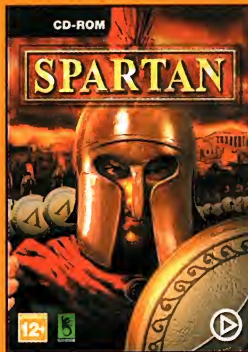
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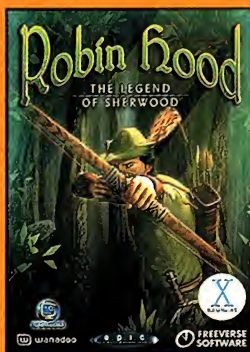
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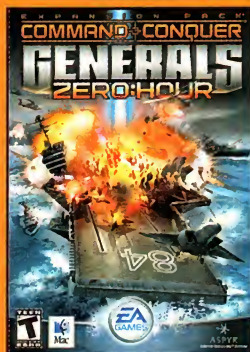
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| Nisus Writer Express 2.1.1 | | Mellel 1.8.2 |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| ■ Type | Word processor | |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★ | ★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Uncluttered user interface; customisable; supports style sheets; powerful find and macro features; support for double-byte languages such as Chinese | Outstanding auto-numbering and notes features; good outlining; superb support for Chinese and Hebrew |
| ■ Cons | No auto-numbering or outlining; no support for right-to-left languages such as Hebrew | Idiosyncratic user interface; doesn't support different editable style sheets in different documents; no support for document sections |
| ■ OS X | Only | Only |
| ■ RRP | \$US60 | \$US39 |
| ■ Publisher | Nisus Software | RedleX |
| ■ Distributor | Available online | Available online |
| ■ Reviewer | William Porter | |
| ■ Hot links | www.nisus.com | www.redlers.com |

Mellel 1.8 and Nisus Writer Express 2.1

Challengers to Word boast strong features and lean performance

Looking for a word processor that has power where you need it but doesn't come with a lot of noisy bells and whistles you never use? Two recently released OS X word processors, Nisus Writer Express 2.1.1 and RedleX's Mellel 1.8.2, offer competitive feature sets at very competitive prices. One may be just right for you.

Sleek, flexible, and a bit geeky. With the release of version 2, Nisus Writer Express comes of age. It now has solid support for style sheets and tables, footnotes and endnotes, columns, in-line images, section formatting, and hyphenation – the features that distinguish word processors from text editors. There's a lot here for power users. You can assign keyboard shortcuts to almost any command. The program offers nameable, editable clipboards, a three-level find-and-replace function including regular expressions (grep) and search criteria you can save, and non-contiguous selection. You can automate processes in AppleScript, via scripting in Perl (a language designed for manipulating text), and by using the basic but efficient Nisus Macro. There's nothing intimidating about Nisus Writer Express; in fact, it's so easy to use, and its user interface is so uncluttered, that beginners will take to it like baby ducks to water.

Writing by numbers. Many users won't mind, but Mellel 1.8 lacks macro and AppleScript support, and its find command is limited to searching only for literal text strings. Its idiosyncratic user interface makes sense once you get to know the application, but you may find that figuring out critical features such as styles and auto-numbering is impossible without reading the guide.

Nonetheless, where Mellel delivers, it really delivers. The program's distinctive excellence is its extraordinarily powerful and flexible auto-numbering system. You can auto-number document parts (or objects such as tables and pictures) on several levels; each level can have its own format, including literal text strings, numbers, and variables. You can also view numbered


levels reflecting document structure as an outline in a separate pane. In addition, Mellel 1.8 offers unequalled footnote and endnote options, a bibliographic database, and table-of-contents generation – features scholars will welcome. With Mellel's support for user-definable document variables, it's clear that the program is up to the task of creating complex structured documents without a hint of feature bloat.

Head-to-head. Using styles to format the parts of a word processing document is more efficient than using ad hoc formats. Styles also help you achieve consistency in your formatting and allow you to reformat documents later by simply redefining styles. Unfortunately, Mellel's implementation of styles is the program's biggest weakness. Only global (application-wide) styles are editable, so defining and editing a common style – Body Text, for example – differently in various documents is not an option. In Nisus Writer Express, changes made to styles in a given document affect only that document; this makes it possible to define and save a variety of differently styled document templates for different purposes. While Nisus Writer Express has a conventional section feature, Mellel currently does not. It's far too difficult in Mellel to get a different header to appear reliably in the different parts of a document.

By default, Nisus Writer Express saves documents in RTF, a standard for word processing documents. Mellel offers RTF as an export option, but for editable documents, it uses its own MELL file format. Both Nisus Writer Express and Mellel can read Microsoft Word .doc files.

Both programs tout their support for non-Latin alphabets, and in my tests both Nisus Writer Express and Mellel did a great job of handling Simplified Chinese. Nisus Writer Express 2 does not support right-to-left languages such as Hebrew, but Mellel does – not surprising, as Mellel's developers are Israeli (mellel means “text” in Hebrew).

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Neither program will appeal to users whose primary requirement in a word processor is that it be Microsoft Word. If you are free to consider alternatives, Nisus Writer Express 2.1.1 or Mellel 1.8.2 might be right for you. If you are an outlining addict or an academic who needs great note options, and if Mellel's quirky styles don't bother you, then Mellel is a great deal.

Although Nisus Writer Express doesn't include outlining, that program's customisation options, powerful text-processing tools, and uncluttered look will appeal to a wide variety of users. 

| | Mac mini 1.25GHz | Mac mini 1.42GHz |
|----------------|--|---|
| ■ Type | Consumer desktop computer | Consumer desktop computer |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★ | ★★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Small and light; good video-out options; excellent design; fast enough for basic tasks | Small and light; good video-out options; excellent design; fast enough for basic tasks |
| ■ Cons | Doesn't come with enough memory; hard-to-find power button on back of unit; performance not as good as similar, no audio-in port | Doesn't come with enough memory; hard-to-find power button on back of unit; performance not as good as similar, larger Macs; no audio-in port |
| ■ RRP | \$799 | \$949 |
| ■ Manufacturer | Apple Computer | |
| ■ Distributor | Apple Australia 133 622 | |
| ■ Reviewer | Jennifer Berger | |
| ■ Hot links | www.apple.com.au/macmini | www.macworld.com/weblogs/editors/2005/01/miniopen/index.php |

Mac mini

Perfect bookshelf box for minimalists

When Steve Jobs unveiled the Mac mini in January, the reaction was a mix of amazement (how did they get that Mac so small?) and uncertainty (can a well-made computer really come in a tiny package?). After all, many Mac veterans thought they'd seen it before – they haven't forgotten the ill-fated Power Mac G4 Cube, Apple's other diminutive Mac.

Mac lovers haven't seen this before. The Mac mini isn't targeted at design pros, it's for regular folks who want to do basic tasks. It costs as little as \$799. It just may be the perfect upgrade for many Mac users, and Windows-to-Mac switchers.

We've given the Mac mini a thorough going-over, even dismantling it (see "Hot links") to probe its insides. We can report that, although the Mac mini has its flaws – such as its unacceptably tiny amount of RAM – many people will find it the perfect Mac.

The setup. The most fun aspect about trying out the Mac mini was setting it up. Taking the Mac mini out of its box is a one-handed operation, since the computer only weighs about 1.5 kilos. In fact, it's easy to be taken aback by the Mac mini's miniscule size; next to an aging Power Mac G4, the mini looks like an external hard drive. With a footprint of only 16.5cm square and a height of 5cm, it might even get lost on a desk full of speakers, a monitor, a lamp, and papers.

The Mac mini's power brick, on the other hand, is not mini at all – it's rather large – but it can at least hide out behind a desk. The power source's location outside the case is really what lets the Mac mini stay so small. In fact, the power brick indicates an overall theme here: you need to have some external components to make the most of this machine. If you have a few USB devices, you'll need a USB hub to plug them in, since the Mac mini only has two USB 2.0 ports. You'll want to connect your FireWire devices to each other (daisy-chaining) to compensate for the mini's sole FireWire 400 port.

Connecting a display was quick work: if needed, the DVI video outlet can be converted to work with a VGA monitor using the

included adapter, and you can also watch slideshows and movies on a TV using the optional DVI to Video Adapter.

Also on the back of the mini is a row of air vents, the Power button (which is a little hard to find without turning the computer around to see it), a headphone/audio-out port, Ethernet jack, modem jack, the power adapter slot (which could be confused with a USB or FireWire port) and a security slot. The only port some people will miss is an audio-in.

The brushed aluminium box with the curved corners looks laughably small next to a monitor. We also used the Mac mini while it was standing on its side, which works well, provided it has adequate space for ventilation. In fact, for people with small children, it may be ideal to place the Mac mini high on a shelf to keep it away from curious hands. Apple repeatedly warns in its

manual not to place anything on top of the Mac mini, as it might interfere with your wireless

internet or Bluetooth connection, should you elect those options. Like Apple's musical hit, the iPod, the Lucite white top of the Mac mini is easily scratched – a fact we found out the hard way.

The rubberised bottom guards against slipping and raises the Mac mini up off a desk to keep air moving out of the unit.



Your Mini choices. The Mac mini comes in two configurations: the \$799 model, with a 1.25GHz G4 processor, 256MB of RAM, a 40GB hard drive, and a Combo (CD-RW/DVD-ROM) drive; and a \$949 model that brings the processor to 1.42GHz processor and the hard drive to 80GB. Consider our strong recommendation to get additional RAM at \$120 for 512MB, and that you may opt for the extras – a 4x SuperDrive is \$155, Bluetooth is \$79 and an AirPort Extreme card is \$119 – and you're looking at a price tag well over \$799, but still cheaper than the next-least-expensive Mac.

Apple also includes the Mac mini with 90 days of free phone support – nothing to sneeze at – and a one-year limited warranty, extendable to up to three years if you purchase the AppleCare Protection Plan. Kudos to Apple for including a succinct, informative, and easy-to-read manual (yes, it really is worth reading).

Decent performer. Although the Mac mini is a desktop machine, many of its components — hard drives, optical drives, processor, and graphics card — are the same as those in the iBook G4. That means that you shouldn't expect the same kind of performance from this machine as you would from an eMac or iMac. In fact, our test results showed that overall, the 1.25GHz Mac mini was significantly slower than an 1.25GHz eMac G4, especially in the iMovie rendering test, the Photoshop Suite test and the Compressor MPEG-2 encoding test.

One surprise in our testing appeared when we tested the hard-drive access speed by duplicating 500MB of data. The 1.25GHz Mac mini beat the faster 1.42GHz model by 10 seconds. Upon further investigation, we found that the 1.25GHz model actually contains a 5,400RPM drive, despite Apple's claim that it contains a 4,200RPM drive. The 1.42GHz model does contain the slower 4,200RPM drive.

The other components worked as expected, with good AirPort reception and quiet operation, except for the somewhat loud robotic whir of the optical drive as it was accessing a disc. Not surprisingly, the Mac mini's built-in speaker is weak, so you'll want to connect external speakers or headphones to listen to music or watch movies. In our many hours of testing, the Mac mini did not heat up our desk much at all, probably due to its well-designed venting system and power supply located outside the case.

We have three words about the 256MB of RAM included with the Mac mini: it's not enough. (Unfortunately, most of the standard consumer-level Macs only come with 256MB.) We used the

mini with 512MB of RAM for hours, and were very happy with its speed and responsiveness, but once we removed that DIMM and put in the stock 256MB DIMM, it seemed a bit sluggish, and wasn't such a pleasure to use anymore. As we've noted in other Mac reviews, 256MB RAM simply isn't enough memory for OS X, especially if you are planning to use the iLife '05 applications, which require a moderate amount of horsepower. At least it's possible to upgrade the mini, but there's only one DIMM slot, so if you get the standard mini with 256MB of RAM, you'll need to buy a 512MB DIMM and replace the 256MB one.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. So is this little design marvel suited for you? The Mac mini will be a stellar bargain Mac if you want a tiny machine that lets you do basic tasks like check e-mail, use office applications, surf the web, and make movies and organise photos. It will be especially attractive if you already have a DVI or VGA monitor, USB keyboard and mouse, and other USB or FireWire peripherals from an earlier Mac or PC. Power users will want to snag it as a headless e-mail, web, or file server to use with a remote application like Netopia's Timbuktu Pro 7.0, Apple Remote Desktop 2, or the open-source VNC. We were disappointed with the meagre RAM in the standard configuration, but took solace in the fact that it's upgradeable.

Windows users who want to get their Mac feet wet without spending much money will find the Mac mini a good starting point. If you need to buy a display, keyboard, and mouse, we'd suggest looking at the 1.25GHz eMac, which starts at \$1299. ☞

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| | PulpFiction 1.1 | Shrook 2.12 | NewsFan 1.6.0 | NewsMac 3.1.3 |
|---------------|---|---|--|--|
| ■ Type | Newsreader | | | |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★½ | ★★★★½ | ★★★★½ | ★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Best interface; excellent grouping and filtering; nice subscription-management features; supports archiving of old articles | Excellent, highly customisable interface; Smart Groups feature allows for easy sorting; supports iPod syncing | Nice three-panel display with support for groups; supports iPod syncing; can use the Mac OS speech utility to read articles and play them back in MP3 format | Supports iPod and Palm OS syncing |
| ■ Cons | No iPod or Palm OS syncing | None significant | Poor Atom-feed handling | Hard to customise |
| ■ OS X | Only | Only | Only | Only |
| ■ RRP | \$US25 | \$US25 | Free | Free |
| ■ Publisher | Freshly Squeezed | Graham Parks | Maki Enterprise | ThinkMac Software |
| ■ Distributor | Available online | Available online | Available online | Available online |
| ■ Reviewer | Mathew Honan | | | |
| ■ Hot links | www.freshlysqueezedsoftware.com | www.fondantfancies.com | www.makienterprise.com | www.thinkmac.co.uk |

RSS-and Atom-feed readers

Automatically download the web to your desktop

The popularity of news-reader applications has grown exponentially over the past year. These programs (also known as news aggregators), which download XML-based content from online publishers to your desktop, have rapidly proliferated, and a once barren product category on the Mac platform has become a field full of exciting contenders.

We examined four popular desktop news readers: Freshly Squeezed Software's PulpFiction 1.1.1, Graham Parks's Shrook 2.12, Maki Enterprise's NewsFan 1.6.0, and ThinkMac Software's NewsMac 3.1.3.

Importing feeds. There are two formats that sites typically use to publish feeds: RSS (which stands for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary) and the newer Atom. RSS is controlled by a single developer, which has locked the code to prevent the addition of new features and to keep RSS simple. Atom was created as a more richly featured alternative. Although RSS remains the most common format, more and more sites are publishing Atom feeds, especially since Blogger and Movable Type now support it.

A good news reader should handle both types of feeds equally well, and almost all the products we looked at do just that. NewsFan had some trouble displaying Atom feeds, noting in error messages that they were not in RSS or Atom 0.3 format.

We began by importing a list of 50 feeds into each reader from a file in OPML (Outline Processor Markup Language), a format used to exchange subscription lists that read RSS and Atom files. This was easily accomplished in each reader. We wanted to see if each feed loaded properly, and here we ran into some problems. NewsFan was the only reader that consistently failed to display certain feeds.

Managing feeds. When you're working with a large number of feeds, it helps to be able to set different rules and groupings for each. In some cases, you might want a certain feed to refresh

more frequently than others; for example, you might want your Slashdot feed to update every half hour, while you want a friend's weblog to refresh only once a day. It's also helpful to be able to group feeds into categories so you can check them based on subject matter, such as job listings or news stories, without having to sort through all your subscriptions.

PulpFiction's feed-management features are by far the easiest to use. The program's separate window for subscription management lets you easily set different refresh rates for each feed. PulpFiction also uses filters to sort feeds into various folders based on rule actions similar to the ones in Apple Mail. Shrook was a close competitor, thanks to its ability to create both static folders for organising feeds and dynamic Smart Groups – similar to iTunes' Smart Playlists – that automatically sort feeds by a variety of user-determined factors, such as subject matter, category, and date updated.

Although it offers support for various groups and categories, NewsMac was a weak performer in this area. Organising feeds into groups was difficult, and removing the app's preset channels was complicated. Presets can be removed via preferences, but NewsMac doesn't let you add new ones.

iPod syncing. An exciting new feature several readers have added is the ability to download news to your iPod. Shrook, NewsFan, and NewsMac can automatically sync news to an iPod (NewsMac can also sync to Palm OS devices), storing articles in the Notes folder so they can be read offline later.

NewsFan can even convert items to audible news, using the Mac OS speech utility to read articles and play them back on an iPod in MP3 format. While none of the readers we tested support podcasting – automatically downloading embedded MP3 files to an iPod or iTunes – we look forward to seeing this function in future versions.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. We were excited to see so many high-quality Mac news readers. PulpFiction 1.1.1 is our favourite, thanks to its highly customisable interface, easy-to-use subscription-management features, and top-notch automatic sorting of feeds into groups. We also recommend Shrook 2.12, for its fantastic interface and iPod syncing. 🐼



Nice view. Shrook can display feeds with the author's formatting intact.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ■ Type | Compression utility |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Increased compression speed, particularly with multiprocessor Macs; sophisticated compression tools; updated Archive Assistant |
| ■ Cons | Expansion-speed increase is unremarkable; limited formats for segmenting tool |
| ■ OS X | Only |
| ■ RRP | \$129 |
| ■ Publisher | Allume Systems |
| ■ Distributor | Pica 03 9388958 |
| ■ Reviewer | Ross Tibbits |
| ■ Hot links | www.allume.com |

StuffIt Deluxe 9.0

Speed and productivity boosts

Answering the challenge for greater speed posed by the Finder's swift Archive command in OS X 10.3, Allume Systems has released StuffIt Deluxe 9.0. This upgrade is a quicker, altogether more functional program that improves archiving flexibility; enhances file encryption, protection, and distribution; and provides faster, more-efficient compression.

The latest version's Archive Assistant operates network-wide:

files located on your desktop or hard drive or accessible via a network can be archived on a server, on a remote drive, or even in your .Mac account. Files that are accessible by more than one network user can be archived with administrative privileges set to protect privacy. The application can also filter information to save only the latest changes on your system, making archiving more efficient.

The Archive Assistant also provides automatic updates and lets you view corresponding update logs via e-mail. This makes it easy to extend the program's functionality while you're on the road.

Updated DropStuff. With version 9.0 comes a retooled DropStuff 9, which refines the primary features in DropZip, DropTar, and DropSegment, and distills them into one application. You can select a variety of files and folders from different locations to create a single archive compressed in the format of your choice (.sitx, .sit, .zip, or .tar). To segment large files, simply select preformatted

segment sizes that are custom-made for CDs or DVDs, for example. You can view segmented files without rejoining them, and search archives using specific criteria. Although the encryption option is available for all formats except .tar, the segmenting tool is available only when you're using the .sitx compression setting. While compressing files, you can access other StuffIt Deluxe functions from the Magic Menu or from the program's contextual menu.

Improved compression speed. Version 9.0, optimised for multi-processor Macs, showed significant performance gains. The program now supports terabyte-size archives and archives containing more than 65,535 files. Both can be compressed with StuffIt's .sitx format.


We used a 649MB folder containing 336 JPEG images to test StuffIt Deluxe 9.0 on two Macs: a dual-processor 1.4GHz Power Mac G4 and a 1.3GHz PowerBook G4.

It took 1 minute and 55 seconds on the multi-processor Mac for StuffIt to compress the folder using the 512-bit encryption setting (.sitx) with the Better Compression option. With the Faster Compression option, it took 1 minute and 27 seconds. Notably, the standard .sit setting compressed the file in 1 minute and 8 seconds, while OS X's Archive command took 2 minutes and 59 seconds to create a .zip archive.

Single-processor Macs, like our 1.3GHz PowerBook, obviously will not experience the same speed gains: compressing the

folder with .sitx's Better Compression setting took 2 minutes and 49 seconds; with the Faster Compression setting, the task was completed in 2 minutes and 3 seconds; and the .sit compression took 1 minute and 39 seconds. All those speeds topped OS X's Archive command, which took 5 minutes and 12 seconds to create a .zip archive.

The included StuffIt Expander application, on the other hand, performed on a par with the Finder's Archive command. Expander took between 48 and 59 seconds to unstuff a file on the multi-processor Mac and between 1 minute and 19 seconds and 1 minute and 50 seconds on the 1.3GHz PowerBook.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. StuffIt Deluxe 9.0 has significantly refined its applications and tools, making this release a worthy upgrade. Although the price may seem a bit high, version 9.0 will prove valuable for people who regularly archive and send large files. 



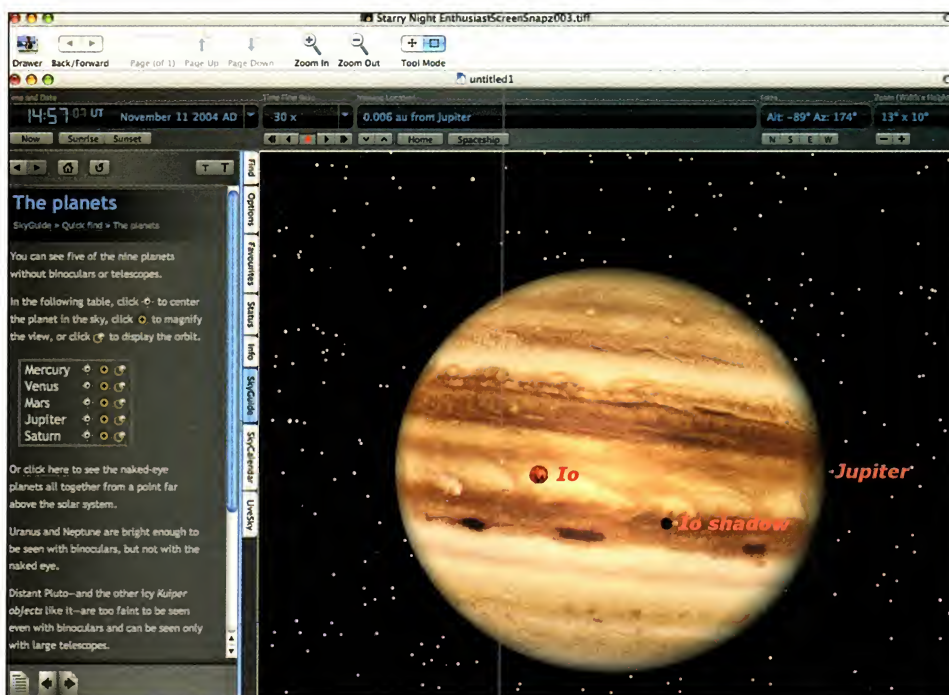
Flexible archiving. DropStuff, StuffIt's integrated compression engine, allows you to drag and drop files and then segment them to fit on a variety of removable media.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ■ Type | Astronomy application |
| ■ Rating | *** |
| ■ Pros | Guided tours introduce novice stargazers to our solar system, the Milky Way, and deep space; includes beautiful high-resolution images of many celestial objects |
| ■ Cons | Difficult-to-master navigation controls and hard-to-find viewing options can leave you lost in space; buggy |
| ■ OS X | Only |
| ■ RRP | \$115 |
| ■ Publisher | Imaginova |
| ■ Distributor | The Binocular and Telescope Shop 02 92621344 |
| ■ Reviewer | Henry Bortman |
| ■ Hot links | www.bintel.com.au |

Starry Night Enthusiast 5.0

Reveals the wonders of the night sky

Nearly everyone can identify the Southern Cross, and possibly Orion, in the night sky. If asked to point to a constellation such as Dorado or Pavo, though, most of us would probably just shrug. Imaginova's Starry Night Enthusiast 5.0 places the sky at your fingertips, making learning the constellations fun and easy.



Access the planets. Starry Night shows an image of Jupiter as its moon, Io, casts a shadow on the planet's surface.

SkyGuide, the most notable new feature, uses a series of simple text and illustration lessons to teach you how to measure angular distances along the dome of the sky with your hands and fingers. To begin using the program, you select a viewing location from a list of cities, towns, and other landmarks. Using Night Sky Tours, you view your night sky as it appears throughout the year. The program prints star charts that you can easily transport for quick studies and outdoor stargazing.

Bundled with a 104-minute DVD, SkyTheater, and the 192-page Starry Night Companion illustrated book, Starry Night Enthusiast delivers a personal planetarium. You can view the sky from different locations, as it appeared in the past, and as it will look in the future. By selecting different rates of time flow, you can watch the sky go through daily, seasonal, and even millennial changes. For example, if you set the viewing rate to one day per time step, the planets appear to sweep across the constellations of the zodiac.

Cruising into space. SkyGuide's Quick Find feature lets you travel through interstellar space while Starry Night displays the galaxies in 3D. Cruising through the Virgo Cluster, which is densely packed with constellations, is especially spectacular.


The program's Spaceship mode allows you to cruise, at speeds of up to 50 million light-years per second, to any of 28,000 distant galaxies, but it's difficult to master, as are Starry Night's other manual navigational controls. The program's display options, which control the brightness of stars, rendering of planetary surface detail, and display of planets' and moons' orbital paths, are complicated by an unfriendly interface that makes finding a specific setting difficult.

Imaginova released version 5.0 prematurely; a number of annoying bugs mar the program. It installs in your Mac OS X

root folder rather than in the Applications folder, for example, and you have to eject the installation discs manually. Cursor behaviour is erratic: the cursor's shape (arrow, hand, resizing tool, and so on) doesn't change correspondingly as the mouse moves over different types of objects in the user interface. On-screen text is sometimes cut off and therefore unreadable. The program occasionally leaves you stuck staring into a vast star field — doing a 180-degree turn to fix the point of view is not always easy to manage. Version 5.0.1, which Imaginova says will address these problems, should be available by the time you read this.

The Pro version of Starry Night 5.0 offers extensive astronomical databases and can automatically aim digitally controlled physical telescopes at selected viewing targets

such as planets and moons. While serious astronomy buffs may find that advanced features such as these are useful, Starry Night Enthusiast will satisfy casual stargazers.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Both Starry Night versions, Enthusiast and Pro, offer a wealth of astronomical information, including the lengthy bundled DVD and illustrated book. Once the bugs are fixed, this appealing program will be the perfect ticket to a voyage into any night sky. 

Test drive.

| | |
|----------------|---|
| ■ Type | Wireless keyboard |
| ■ Rating | *** |
| ■ Pros | Wireless; one-handed operation |
| ■ Cons | Awkward key combinations may slow you down |
| ■ RRP | \$US176 plus \$US15 shipping from Sydney |
| ■ Manufacturer | FrogPad |
| ■ Distributor | Available online |
| ■ Reviewer | Franklin N Tessler |
| ■ Hot links | www.frogpad.com (click on the link to Australia and New Zealand) |

FrogPad Bluetooth iFrog

Lets you type with one hand – awkwardly

Your Mac's keyboard may sport futuristic features like volume controls and backlit keys, but typing remains a two-handed proposition. FrogPad claims that its Bluetooth iFrog, a device that measures about fifteen by ten centimetres, improves on the QWERTY keyboard by letting you work with only one hand. Although it's not the ideal keyboard replacement, the iFrog is a good solution if you can't use both hands to type.

You use the index, middle, and ring fingers of your right hand to operate the iFrog's three rows of keys. (FrogPad also sells a mirror-image model for lefties.) Because there are only 15 main keys, each has multiple functions, which are denoted by colour-coded labels. A black letter shows the key's primary character, which requires only one key press.

Five large modifier keys at the bottom of the keyboard let you enter secondary characters such as Q and X, but this keyboard uses the keys inconsistently. To type a lowercase L, for example, you must hit the L key with your index finger while pressing the space key with your thumb. To type a hyphen, you have to press and release the Symbol key to enter Symbol mode and then hit the H key – and if you want to go back to typing letters, you have to press the Symbol key again. According to FrogPad, the iFrog's layout ensures that English-language typists have to press only one key at a time 86 percent of the time.

FrogPad claims that you'll be able to type 40 words a minute after using the iFrog for less than ten hours. I never reached anywhere near that speed on the iFrog after more than eight hours of use, although I can type almost 60 words per minute on my QWERTY keyboard. I'm not entirely sure why I didn't do better, but the Symbol key was certainly part of the problem – FrogPad should change it to apply only to the next key press.

The iFrog works wirelessly with any Bluetooth-enabled Mac. A full battery charge should last at least a week for typical business users who use the keyboard daily. A USB model is also available.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. For most people, there's probably no good reason to switch to the Bluetooth iFrog – if you're using a laptop, you won't save any space, and you'll still have to use your standard keyboard for some tasks. If you can't use both hands to type, the iFrog is certainly worth considering. 

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| | |
|---------------|--|
| ■ Type | Remote-management application |
| ■ Rating | \$\$\$ 1/2 |
| ■ Pros | VNC support; remote package installation; enterprise directories |
| ■ Cons | Lockstep upgrade; security lapses |
| ■ OS X | Only |
| ■ RRP | ten clients \$499; unlimited clients \$799 |
| ■ Publisher | Apple Computer |
| ■ Distributor | Apple Australia 133 622 |
| ■ Reviewer | Andrew T Laurence |
| ■ Hot links | www.apple.com.au/remotedesktop |

Apple Remote Desktop 2.1

Says goodbye to OS 9

Any administrator who has been in charge of multiple Macs knows the repetitive chore of installing and updating software. Add in the inevitable phone calls requesting help, and you quickly wish you could shorten the distance between users' computers and your chair.

Apple Remote Desktop 1.0 was Apple's first foray into remote control and desktop management. However, its capabilities lagged behind those of Netopia's stalwart Timbuktu Pro, and the desktop management was riddled with glitches and lacked obvious tools that would've made the support job easier. Version 2.1 makes great strides to correct deficiencies in both areas.

Upgrade planning. The new version is a dramatic departure from the 1.X versions, so you should carefully plan this upgrade. First, OS 9 has been jettisoned. Ssecond, this is a lockstep upgrade: the Remote Desktop administration application controls and manages only clients of the same version. Older clients can be upgraded over the network, as long as they are version 1.2 or later. (Make sure that the Remote Desktop application is in the Applications folder before you upgrade to 2.1, and make sure that you open the Remote Desktop ports in OS X's firewall so you can manage the machine after upgrading.)

Reaching out. Version 2.1 adopts the open-source Virtual Network Computing (VNC) protocol for screen sharing and control. Remote Desktop is now noticeably faster than other VNC implementations, and it's nearly as fast as Timbuktu. Apple is documenting the changes for the open-source community, and it hopes that other projects will adopt them.

VNC broadens the Mac's support options to other platforms, substantially increasing Remote Desktop's value. Now any computer with a free VNC viewer can control a Mac running the free 2.1 client. (Do not confuse Apple Remote Desktop with Microsoft's similarly named client for Windows terminal services; they don't interoperate.)

In testing interoperability with other VNC programs, I found that TightVNC was the most compatible with Remote Desktop. Because it lacks Apple's customisation features, TightVNC isn't quite as fast as Remote Desktop. Like Timbuktu, Remote Desktop has a full-screen mode and supports scroll wheels and right-clicking. Timbuktu is still unique in some areas,

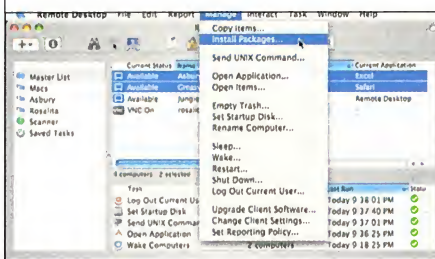
particularly two-way file copying and dragging files to the display window.

Because VNC is not an encrypted protocol, security precautions are necessary. Adept administrators can tunnel their Remote Desktop sessions inside a Secure Shell (SSH) or virtual private network (VPN) connection, but we think Apple should provide an encrypted solution. An included kickstart command-line utility helps somewhat; it allows you to configure, start, and stop the Remote Desktop client from within an SSH session.

Digging in. Apple Remote Desktop's management operations are processed as tasks, and they can be saved or scheduled for later use. The program locates clients with Rendezvous by searching IP ranges, or you can type in an IP number. Both Remote Desktop and VNC clients can be put on machine lists for later reference, and individual machines can be listed in multiple categories, such as Laptops and Marketing. Version 2.1 eradicates a bug that limited an administrator machine to only 29 network locations.

One of the program's neatest tricks is its remote configuration of a client's access settings from the administration application. You can specify which users have access, parcel different levels of access to different users, specify whether generic VNC viewers may

access a machine, and even create users on the local machine just for Remote Desktop. Remote Desktop nicely leverages enterprise directories; you can assign privileges to groups, and version




Easy updates. Apple Remote Desktop 2.1 lets you install update packages; all tasks are logged.

2.1 adds authentication to Microsoft's Active Directory. All these attributes can be pushed to client computers, or included in a stand-alone client installer.

Copying files to client machines is now easier, as you can drag files from the Finder to the Copy dialog box. A Remote Desktop administrator can install software that uses Apple's installer packages; version 2.1 easily executes a restart after installation if one is needed. Other software, however, must be copied to the clients and installed via a control session.

Despite version 2.1's many improvements, Remote Desktop is still a young product, and it could use some additional features. It doesn't support AppleScript; the graphical interface cannot quit applications on a client machine; you can set a client's startup disk, but you must type a partition's name if there is more than one on a disk; and the software-version report still offers only comparisons with the administrator's computer.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Apple Remote Desktop 2.1 has matured nicely but could stand some improvement. Adopting VNC makes Macs more accessible to other platforms and more appealing to traditional IT departments. The price may seem expensive at first blush, but if you're installing a bunch of Xserves, it's much cheaper than video cards and associated cabling. 

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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

See change

I like watching Macworld keynote addresses, even though the only way I have ever seen one is through a small murky QuickTime window. I like the way that the fervour jumps through the screen and the way that (whoever the preacher man happens to be) the passion suffuses every utterance from the stage. I like the way that the audience will cheer anything, from an app suddenly vanishing while being shown off by the great Mr Jobs, to that crazed cheering when iTools became .Mac and suddenly cost money. After all, the keynote audience is the anointed. They are many of them shareholders. They like to cheer, and recently they have been cheering a lot.

The Word is, of course, iPod. iPod, which owns most of the portable music market and will soon (with a bit of luck) lock the entire online music industry into a digitally rights-managed theme park owned directly and wholly by Apple for the rest of all human history. Or something.

And you take it from me, from the sound of the cheering that came through my small muddy QuickTime screen, whatever that something might be, the faithful think that it can't do the share prices any harm. Things are rosy. So here comes iPod shuffle to lock up completely the very last of the music biz and make them rosier still.

There isn't much question on the subject. The iPod shuffle is about as gorgeous a piece of thing as such things can get. It literally screams "impulse buy" and gasps "cute" on the inhale. It makes my Creative MuVo look sad for no really sensible reason and makes me want to own one just to see how long I can keep it safe from scratches. Judging by my own emotional reaction, the shuffle won't do any harm to Apple's share prices.

My intellectual reaction, though, is another thing. The iPod shuffle has flaws. It reminds me rather strongly of a particular type of Parker pen that was available a while back. This pen had a holder that hung around the owner's neck and which the pen clipped upwards into. It was a great idea. No more blue pen ink in shirt pockets! A stylish fashion statement, too!

That was if the multitudes of people wandering around with empty holders hanging around their necks could be called stylish.

Those people had this look about them that said, "I know I had a pen around here somewhere". It wasn't an entirely happy look, that one. I occasionally found those pens just lying in the street. I know that I never found a holder to clip one of the pens into.



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Dangly things on lanyards that get lost

Now, which end of the iPod shuffle do you think the lanyard attaches to? The good bit? Or the embarrassing bit? Do you think that this is a roundabout way of Apple getting iShuffles to people who never intended buying one and were just watching the ground as they walked along, thereby expanding the market and boosting the sacred share price?

Then there are those trademark white headphones. With their trademark white wire, that travel down parallel with the lanyard and all the way to the bottom of the unit before plugging in. One small white cute minimalist object, four fat, rather ugly snaggy wires that look like an escaped tapeworm proudly hanging off the user's shirt.

How long before the shuffle and those tangled wires find their way into the average user's armpit? Surely Apple can do better than that? Why not have the lanyard at the other end, and integrate the lanyard with the earphone wires? Just have the earphone wires sprout out of the lanyard at the right point to arrive at the ears with a minimum of fuss? After all, Apple is supposed to be a design leader that hates wires.

The Mac mini is similar in the design stakes. It has an emotional appeal high on the Richter scale — and won't burn DVDs. At all. How dumb is that? Particularly when you factor in that iDVD, which the Mac mini has bundled with it, is notoriously incapable of dealing with external DVD burners. Then how about that useless amount of RAM? Targeting switchers with a truly wonderful solution is one thing, but targeting them with a machine that is halfway hobbled by the amount of RAM that it has onboard is — wait for it, wait for it — just ... plain ... silly.

Both the iPod shuffle and the Mac mini show that Apple is now hammering with gusto at the market wedge that the iPod has opened up, and hammering hard before the water-muddying arrival of Windows Longhorn. Both products are compromises between the demands of good design and the demands of the shareholders, but the shuffle is, in my opinion, less good design and more compromise than Apple should really make a habit of.

That said, this last keynote was a record breaker. Steve sold me on the Mac mini, Tiger and the iPod shuffle. The fact that I can actually afford all three is a real sea change. And a welcome one. ☺

Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.

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